



THE  
EMBROIDERED BANNER  
AND  
OTHER MARVELS.

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# THE EMBROIDERED BANNER





# THE EMBROIDERED BANNER,

AND OTHER MARVELS.

BY

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AUTHOR OF

"THE HORSE GUARDS," "THE DAYS WHEN WE HAD TAILS ON US,"

"THE SECRETARY," "THE MAN WHO ELOPED WITH HIS OWN WIFE,"

"PENELOPE WEDGEbone," "THE WHITE CHARGER,"

"THE GUARDS AND THE LINE,"

&c. &c.

With Eight Coloured Steel Etchings,

BY ALFRED ASHLEY.

"Imagination cannot invent as many contrarieties, as are naturally in the heart  
of man."

ROCHEFOUCAULT.

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## CONTENTS.

1. THE MALAGA ASSASSINS .....	PAGE	15
2. EL ENCIERRO .....	"	35
THE CONVENT OF SANTA INEZ .....	"	47
SWISS GIANTESS.....	"	69
FLORADO .....	"	97
BROKEN FAN .....	"	121
THE FIEND.....	"	161
8. THE EMBROIDERED BANNER .....	"	185
9. MY FIRST AND ONLY LOAN .....	"	271



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## ILLUSTRATIONS.

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THE ROCK OF GIBRALTAR . . . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
THE EMBROIDERED BANNER . . . . .	<i>Title-page</i>
LOS LADRONES . . . . .	25
THE MURDER . . . . .	61
A WIFE'S DEVOTION . . . . .	109
THE FATAL GIFT . . . . .	128
THE FIEND . . . . .	165
THE BETRAYAL . . . . .	210



## INTRODUCTION.

IN this present age of restlessness and travel, when those who possess at home every luxury and comfort which wealth and pre-eminent superiority of station can command; when those very persons so enviably situated, seized with the all-pervading mania, hasten to exchange their manifold advantages for the numerous drawbacks and inconveniences which necessarily meet the wanderer in a foreign land, it cannot be made matter of surprise, that the inferior classes, always prompt to imitate the foibles of the aristocracy, follow in their wake.

Thus, then, comes it to pass, that the formerly unsophisticated tailor, when taking your measure for a coat, betrays the extent of his travels by a comparison between Buckingham Palace and the Kremlin; your bootmaker directs his apprentice to drop your "small account" at the *Alhambra*, in sheer forgetfulness, for the *Albany*; and your cook produces a *carte* at dinner, so interspersed with scraps from all the languages on earth, that not even gastronomic experience can elucidate of what materials the dishes are composed.

A man who has not been down the Rhine from Coblenz, or up the Peak of Teneriffe—who cannot boast of having swallowed kabobs in Constantinople, or been shampooed at Alexandria, may as well write "not at home" upon his door, and rest content to pass the remainder of his days unsought for and disregarded.

Who among the rising generation ever dreams of tarrying in England the instant the shackles of school and college are unloosed? Places may now be booked at the Black Bear in Piccadilly, for Kamtschatka itself; and, at almost every hour of the twenty-four, vessels of all denominations and descriptions, sail from the Thames, freighted with wondering cocknies, bound in search of marvels, towards nearly every corner of the habitable globe.

Amateurs in their yachts, shape their course to countries known to our forefathers, by aid of some now forgotten map alone; while other less fortunate aspirants for knowledge, who are unable to claim a vessel as their own exclusive property, take advantage of the fortuitous circumstances of their more affluent friends, and readily enrol themselves as part of the live cargo.

France, Switzerland, and Italy, have long since been overrun by my wonder-seeking countrymen; and at this epoch, Spain is undergoing an exactly similar inspection. Go where you may, from Cordova to Barcelona, from Bilboa to Seville, at every step Englishmen may be encountered, sketch-book and pencil in hand, noting, drawing, smoking, and sputtering bad Spanish, deceived with the idea that a few lessons taken at Cadiz have fully qualified them to express their meaning in the pure Castilian tongue. Yet what can it by possibility matter, provided the tourist himself derives pleasure and amusement from the trip? Little does he heed, though hereafter it should come to light, that the Spanish *mantillas* purchased at Valencia, for his fair friends at home, were fabricated at half the price in Spitalfields, and afterwards smuggled from Gibraltar! These are inferior annoyances. The article was bought in Spain, and in nine cases out of ten, it is brought back with much care and trouble, possibly to within a short distance of the very frame from which it dated its origin. Moreover, what avails it if the ancient fans, —*abanicos antiguos*,—so earnestly sought for, and so eagerly prized when purchased from some obscure shop in Grenada, were

## INTRODUCTION.

constructed but a few weeks previously in Paris? Of what consideration are these and many other trifles, when the momentary annoyances are passed? None—absolutely none! Bad lodgings, scanty fare, long and tedious journeys, afford subjects for most agreeable reminiscences, when related by a warm fireside at home; while the privation and misery encountered, which have long since passed away, give ample scope for congratulation and mirth. Yet, much as the bygone adventures may be expatiated upon, over a cool bottle of claret, in England—the narrator averring that “never had he passed a happier time”—I imagine the degree of felicity experienced during the infliction, partook not wholly of so ecstatic a nature as the sprightly recapitulation might lead his friends to surmise.

Does there exist an English biped of the male sex, who has not visited Cadiz and Seville in these days of rapid locomotion, when, thanks to the Oriental Steam Company, those cities may be reached by aid of a spirited investment of some sixteen pounds of Her Britannic Majesty's current coin of the realm? and without much further encroachment on the finances of the sight-seeing Londoner, the spot in the ocean can be pointed out, where, in October 1804, we amused ourselves by destroying upwards of four hundred human beings, blowing up a man-of-war, and seizing three other vessels laden with treasure, all whereof appertained to a nation, with whom at the period alluded to we were on terms of profound peace.

But the less we touch on that subject may, peradventure, prove the wisest course to pursue.

Continuing his route, the traveller will regale his olfactory nerves and his palate, if he so pleases, with the omnipresent “*ajo*” at Santa Maria, quaff *montiliado* from the pigskins at Xeres, play dominoes in a *posaderia* on the banks of the Guadalquivir, witness a bull-fight at the *Plaza de Toros* at Seville, and with all this, having run through the wonders descanted on in the handbooks, find himself safely ensconced behind his counter in Regent Street, ere the delay in the trans-

mission of articles ordered by his customers, prior to his departure, excites comment.

It does not, however, happen as a matter of course, that all persons traversing a country care to make themselves conversant with traditions and localities which, in those parts of the universe where they briefly sojourn, may be best worth the trouble of investigating; and therefore is it that many a man returns home after a lengthened absence, as profoundly ignorant of the leading curiosities appertaining to the land to which he has just bid adieu, as by possibility could have been the case, had he never quitted the county of Middlesex.

But what of that? The grand desideratum has been achieved—the wanderer *has* been abroad; he can now boast among his friends of divers strange adventures having occurred to him personally, when exploring other lands; and, above all, he has visited, and, consequently, feels fully competent to descant on the unrivalled beauties of fertile plains, and the perfumed orange groves in romantic Spain.

With what feelings of conscious superiority he listlessly attends to the dull uninteresting details recounted by those whose peregrinations, during the previous summer, extended no further than Margate or Ramsgate, unprofitably spending their time in listening to the squalling voice of some astounding “infant phenomena,” or equally to be shunned “precocious genius,” unaccountably got up at the very shortest possible notice, whenever required.

How apathetically he lends his ear to lengthened details of the fluctuating chances, common to all idlers, who desperately rush into raffles to obtain prizes, which, when possessed, are found wholly devoid of even a semblance of utility—and with what self-satisfaction the finished traveller glides the conversation towards Lisbon and Cadiz, and thence extending his voyage to Gibraltar, carries his admiring audience through the beautiful Alameda of Malaga, or patronizingly descants to the vast wonderment of his entranced listeners, on the unequalled

and elaborately decorated Patios of the Alhambra, all which information he probably derived previous to quitting England, by a judicious outlay of half-a-crown, at the nearest convenient book-stall.

\* Multifarious are the motives by which Englishmen, and my fair countrywomen likewise, are prompted to roam abroad, exposed to innumerable inconveniences and discomforts, in preference to remaining at home, where, possibly, they may have been accustomed, from infancy, to the enjoyment of all that wealth and high station can command.

An apposite instance of this occurred a short time back, when a party, in undisputed possession of all we are accustomed to regard as Heaven's choicest gifts, suddenly bethought them, that their uninterrupted flow of happiness and comfort required the infusion of a small portion of life's slightly bitter and minor disagreeables, to render them more capable of appreciating the ease and good things by which they were on all sides surrounded. Under this impression, Spain was fixed on as the theatre for attempting the experiment, wisely conjecturing, that if not rendered sufficiently wretched in the land of fleas and vineyards, guitars and tomatas, nothing would be more easy than to cross to Africa, and, by prosecuting a journey to Fez, not a doubt remained on their minds, but the difference between the luxury to be met with in England, and the poverty and squallid filth of Barbary, would prove satisfactorily extensive for the accomplishment of the object aimed at.

Thus resolved, arrangements for leaving London were soon planned and effected, and Gibraltar having been decided on as the head-quarters from whence the anticipated expedition was to sally, three vessels of the Royal Yacht Squadron dropped their anchors in the transparent water of the Mediterranean, off the Rock, and the enterprising party were soon safely landed at the Ragged Staff Guard.

I do not purpose inflicting my readers with a lengthened detail of the batteries and excavations of that renowned fortress,

a minute description of all and every part thereof, having long since been committed to print in Drinkwater's account of the "Siege of Gibraltar," and "James's History of the Straits;" but what will prove more to the purpose, I will enter on a brief review of the enthusiastic travellers.

In the first place—as by right, courtesy, and respect, is their due—I must premise there were ladies forming a portion, though, numerically speaking, but a very small one of the group; and much was I astonished at beholding two of England's fairest and titled daughters, voluntarily embarking on what to them could not have appeared otherwise than a hazardous and most fatiguing amusement; nevertheless they gallantly determined to brave every impediment which might be started in opposition to further prosecuting their travels; and truly can I affirm, that the whole trip would have lost its principal, if indeed not its entire zest, had the sweet smiles and unruffled good temper invariably displayed, by two as lovely beings as ever budded on the aristocratic tree, been withdrawn from the expedition. Neither of the ladies had previously been in Spain, nor on the Barbary coast, both which achievements they were resolved to accomplish before the yachts were again moored at Cowes.

Of the gentlemen, one was perfectly well acquainted with the country, and also conversant with the language spoken both by the Spaniards and the Moors; it may therefore readily be admitted, that he was in constant demand, particularly by the ladies; and if the explanations he afforded on the interminable variety of subjects and questions, propounded for his solution, were correct, his information, wherever it came from, must have taken centuries to acquire, and would have puzzled eternity to exhaust.

If the complaisant cavalier was in any degree indebted to a fertile imagination for the humorous details with which he constantly enlivened the party, it mattered little from what source the ever-welcome anecdotes were gathered, so that the relation

of the marvels proved acceptable to his listeners; and of that the reader may have an opportunity of judging, if he cares to continue the perusal of these pages.

Three other men were attached to the number of the tourists. The chief, if I may so term him, or head of the party, was in possession of many advantages beyond those at the command of the generality of travellers. Hereditary and high military rank, added to no inconsiderable celebrity as a diplomatist, instantaneously procured, at his bidding, access to persons and places well worth the time occupied in their scrutiny, but which, had he not been armed with such facilities, and the probable period of his arrival duly notified through some official channel beforehand, might have proved difficult if not impossible of achievement: in consequence whereof the gallant General became an object of as much curiosity to the rulers, particularly at Tetuan and Tangier, as the distributors of the bastinado could possibly have proved to his Excellency.

Of the two yet to be described, one was a soldier of ancient and illustrious descent, but whether hopelessly in love, or afflicted with some melancholy malady, I know not; yet was he in all respects the very reverse in joyousness and apparent elasticity of spirit to his friend of the many languages already mentioned. I do not purpose conveying the idea that he was uncompanionable or morose, nor indeed anything approaching to aught objectionable; far from it; yet there was a sadness in his tone, a quiet indifference to events, which, though possibly of no great moment, nevertheless were of sufficient consequence to attract the notice and interest the attention of others.

The last individual of those noted and yet to be pointed out, was a nobleman, affable and courteous to all, excessively ardent in the pursuit of his immediate avocation, and a very considerable acquisition to the *cortége*.

As regards myself—at the date I write of, I chanced to be stationed at Gibraltar, with my regiment, and owing to circumstances unnecessary to be here detailed, I received an invi-

tation to make one in the contemplated journey, and readily did I accept the flattering offer.

Long and conflicting were the consultations held at Gibraltar by my aristocratic acquaintances, touching the most desirable mode of proceeding. All agreed in wishing to see everything; but no two persons could coincide on the question as to what place should be visited first. The gallant Marquis was anxious to inspect the Duke of Wellington's estates near St. Fe, while the ladies were peremptory on the point of sailing forthwith in the direction of Tetuan, in the hope of obtaining at least a glimpse of the interior of the Bashaw's harem.

Our melancholy ally quietly expressed a wish to behold the spot in Grenada, where, in 1832, the beautiful Mariana Pineda suffered a violent and cruel death rather than betray her lover to his enemies. The noble Lord, no indifferent musician himself, was impatient to test the capabilities of the organ in the cathedral of Malaga, while our more mercurial companion, strenuously advocated Cadiz for primary inspection, an opinion possibly strengthened by his acquaintance with a pair of the softest bright eyes, then beaming at Seville, the possessor of which most dangerous weapons had wielded them somewhat to the inconvenience and uneasiness of our volatile cicerone.

"I must acknowledge," observed the beautiful Lady Blanche, "my curiosity to behold the Bashaw's Moorish wives predominates over all the temptations you so alluringly detail, as awaiting us elsewhere."

"And I fully agree with Blanche," chimed in her no less lovely relative, "the Bashaw's wives, by all means, first—after that, anything and everything you please."

"An overture should invariably precede the play," laughingly observed Lord Ashdale; "so I for one vote for the organ at Malaga *a priori*; what say you, Offersley?"

"Oh, Offersley of course votes for tragedy before Moors or music, and would start at once for the scene of Mariana Pineda's murder," jocosely remarked the facetious Mr. Fitzlay,

effectually checking any reply which the party addressed might have felt inclined to advance.

"You won't allow Offersley to speak for himself, Fitzlay," said his Excellency; "but as it appears evident that my proposition for St. Fe is certain to be negatived if divided on, I shall beg to withdraw my motion, and, as a measure of necessity, coincide with the ladies," which announcement was of course received with all the homage due to the lovely conquerors, at whose triumphal car, even the not over juvenile, yet still gallant Peer, willingly admitted himself in bondage.

"Yet, if I might presume to remark on such an arrangement," observed Mr. Fitzlay, "I would take the liberty of pointing out how desirable it would be—at all events for the better furthering their Ladyships' wishes—were the Bashaws at Tangier and Tetuan to be made acquainted with the honour intended, prior to your Lordship's reaching their principalities, since half your dignity would be lost in their estimation, and their own consequence considerably abridged, were the usual procrastinations and delays common on similar occasions, lost sight of. I would, therefore, observe, that were you to sail to-morrow for the Barbary coast, you would, in all probability arrive at your destination prior to the necessary ceremonious documents being ready, much less received, by the Moorish potentates; while, on the other hand, provided the ladies are willing to defer that visit, and will allow the short voyage to Cadiz to take the precedence, everything, as your Lordship knows, is so arranged that your arrival at the latter port cannot prove unexpected."

With many and similar cogent reasons, each tending to the one object, the privileged Mr. Fitzlay so grafted upon his audience, that ere half an hour had elapsed, it was determined the anchors should be weighed at daybreak on the following morning, and the yacht's course directed towards Cadiz.

Where persons are resolved to be pleased, it is no difficult task for others to make them so, and such happily proved the

case in the present instance. A fair wind, and beautifully unclouded sky, offering every indication of a quick and prosperous voyage, the whole party embarked on board the largest of the three vessels, and the others progressed closely in her wake, in the event of their services being required.

And a right merry company the gallant schooner carried. But why expatiate on the comforts, and, indeed, luxuries abounding in an English gentleman's yacht? All who are cognizant with the subject, need no recapitulation of those surpassing excellencies; while others, who are uninformed on the matter, never could be made to comprehend the delights and advantages appertaining to a well-appointed private vessel, were I to write on the subject for ever.

Let it suffice—all that wealth could command, and anxiety to please, were put in full practice by the noble owner, and unparalleled was his success in making every guest on board his schooner feel perfectly devoid of ceremonious embarrassment, or *ennui*.

"I should like to know, Ashdale," observed his Excellency, after dinner, "I should much like to know, why you have taken so sudden and violent a fancy for the organ of the cathedral at Malaga; is it reported as being so very superior to all others, so as to cause such a restlessness on your part to hear it?"

"I really can hardly answer the question," replied the other, "further than to acknowledge having listened to many accounts of its excellence, which, I suppose, engendered my wish; and being now so short a distance from the spot, where I might easily be gratified, I naturally feel anxious to benefit by so favourable an opportunity."

"Though I have heard the organ in the cathedral at Malaga," remarked Mr. Fitzlay, "I cannot say the tone of the instrument struck me as being any thing super-eminently excellent, to what we may hear any day at home."

"Was it so very bad then?" asked Colonel Offersley.

"No, I do not say *that*," replied the other; "but, at any

## INTRODUCTION.

rate, there are worse things to be found in Malaga than organ."

"Likely enough," chimed in his Excellency. "But to what in particular do you allude?"

"Nothing tragical, I trust?" inquired the Colonel.

"It might have been," answered the other.

"What *was* it, Mr. Fitzlay?" inquired Lady Blanche smiling. "I am confident some dreadful story is attached to the hint you have dropped.

"Oh, *do* tell it," exclaimed Lady Mary, "it *must* be interesting!"

"For that I by no means vouch," replied the gentleman spoken to. "The recollections occurring in my mind a few moments since, on his Excellency's reference to Malaga, arose from a circumstance, which actually befel an intimate friend of my own, some few weeks since, in the very town his Lordship was speaking of, and for the veracity whereof I can safely pledge myself.

"The anecdote, however, possesses few points of interest, and less of novelty to recommend it; but if the ladies desire, I will gladly do my best at the command of such an audience." And with a suitable obeisance commensurate with the flowing language uttered, Mr. Fitzlay proceeded to inform his friends what befel his intimate acquaintance, whose name however he did not deem it necessary to recount.

"Malaga," commenced the narrator, "Malaga was the scene of my relative's adventure, and it bade fair to witness his last; but eventually his better genius prevailed, and he escaped from the cuchillio of the Spanish assassin."

"Was there an assassin in the story?" eagerly asked Lady Blanche.

"A real Spanish assassin?" chimed in her fair relative; "oh, delightful! Pray proceed, Mr. Fitzlay; I am dying to hear the narrative."

"I fear, ladies," replied the Feramorz of the party, "I fear

you will be disappointed ; but such as the story is I willingly relate it, merely premising that the occurrences actually took place in the manner I now purpose to detail."

"The prologue having been now spoken," interrupted Lord Ashdale, "I pray you, Fitzlay, to begin your tale."

The gentleman thus adjured making suitable reverence to the fairer portion of his listeners, commenced — *The Malaga Assassins.*

# THE MALAGA ASSASSINS.

'Tis wiser to prevent an urgent danger,  
Than to lose time in questioning how it grew.

*Twelfth Night.*



## THE MALAGA ASSASSINS.

GENTLE ladies, have you ever visited Malaga? If not, a view of the town from its beautiful and placid bay will well repay the trouble of your journey. There is something about Malaga which, to my imagination, has ever appeared more attractive than many larger and far more magnificent Spanish towns. The picturesque appearance of the old fort, towering over the many coloured buildings beneath, and the massive walls and yet-unfinished turrets of the cathedral, cannot fail to attract the attention of all travellers. The latter edifice is a stupendous pile: it was commenced by Philip II., and in all probability will be completed—never; certainly not as long as abuses exist in every department of that misgoverned and distracted country.

The interior of the building is, in point of size, truly magnificent; and had the plan and intentions of the original projector been carried on and executed by his successors, it would have ranked as one of the finest cathedrals in Spain.

The time to visit Malaga is in the fruit season. Then it is more particularly than at any other period, that the streets and quays are crowded with persons engaged in freighting the vessels with the produce of the neighbouring soil. Wines of many descriptions, far too various to enumerate, and boxes upon boxes of the famed raisins, meet you at the turning of every street, while huge baskets of figs, and enormous packets of lavender,

wend their way from out the various storehouses of the merchants, and are borne along to one common goal, the quay. And then the pleasures of a quiet stroll down the broad pathways of the shady Alaméda, when the cool evening breeze springing up is so gratefully inhaled by those who have been compelled to undergo the burning heat of the mid-day sun; the handsome houses on either side of the well-filled promenade; the plashing of the fountain; the sound of the distant guitar; the gay apparel of the men; and, above all, the bright eyes of the beautiful women, all tend to cast an influence over the senses, which we never experience during a ramble through the most celebrated of *our* own country towns.

It was on such an evening, and after having enjoyed the pleasure of gazing on the various animated groups slowly sauntering by, that my friend, warned by the thick shadows fast closing around, should have prepared to leave the rapidly-thinning walks; lights were beginning to glimmer through the curtained lattices of the lofty *ventánas*; party after party disappeared; and in a brief space nothing remained to break the stillness of the night, save the gay strain of distant music as it came floating on the breeze; or the joyous laugh of happy childhood; or, peradventure, the more melodious voice of some fair *señorita*, warbling the beautiful ballads of her native Andalusia.

Lured by the delicious freshness of the breeze, and yielding to an influence which was fast gaining the ascendancy, my relative was insensibly led into a strain of musing, carrying him far back among scenes of other days, to the total extinction of all recollection of the lateness of the passing hour, and also unmindful of the darkness which reigned around. What may have been the precise nature of the gentleman's cogitations, I cannot take upon myself to determine; neither could I boldly assert that he had not for some time past been actually asleep; however that may be, when he at length roused himself from his recumbent position, the lights, which had previously glittered

## THE MALAGA ASSASSINS.

from so many casements, were in course of being withdrawn; the sounds of mirth and music had long since passed away, and, striking his repeater, he discovered that it wanted but brief period to midnight.

.To walk through the streets of London at that hour, would not present the slightest difficulty to the mind, but to wander through the narrow alleys and blind passages of a Spanish town, between eleven and twelve o'clock, P. M. is an affair of a very different complexion. In the one case you are, possibly, incommoded by the number of policemen, who at every lamp scrutinize your features, as though they expected to see "housebreaker" stamped on your forehead; while in the other you are equally liable to inconvenience, but from a very different cause, since, you might as well expect to meet the whole of the metropolitan force, as anything approaching, either in duty or appearance, to a watchman; in short, no such functionary exists: the principal gentlemen who stroll about at that period being chiefly confined to those, whose inordinate appetite for the property of others, induces them to sally forth, when darkness favours their designs, and also affords a good opportunity for enjoying a feeling of gratified revenge, by poniarding an intimate acquaintance, who may chance to possess the unenviable notoriety of being blessed with a larger portion of some fair lady's favour than had fallen to the lot of another. Neither of these characters were precisely that which my friend felt desirous of encountering; yet, having reached Malaga but on the previous day, he deemed it more than improbable that in so short a time he could have given cause for a feeling of jealousy being entertained against so inoffensive a person as himself; and as regarded his person, he felt perfectly at ease on that score, conscious that there were the extent of the sum which at that moment was about him. Unhesitatingly, therefore, did the wanderer pursue his way homeward, to reach which it was absolutely necessary to pass the mansion of the English Consul, an excellent house in itself, but

surrounded by many and various dismal-looking entrances, leading whereto it might be difficult to assert. It was now about twelve o'clock; the wind, which before had merely added its refreshing coolness to the atmosphere, was rapidly rising, sweeping in its way long and thick eddies of dust round the angles of the streets. The night had become extremely dark, and the few lanterns, which, by-the-by, were erected by the English merchants, scarcely sufficed to point out the road.

My friend had just reached the residence of Her Britannic Majesty's representative, when a strong gust of air, bearing in its vortex a mass of dirt and rubbish, induced him suddenly to wheel round, rather than encounter the nuisance. With his face thus turned until the unwelcome assailant had swept by, the benighted traveller fancied he perceived the figures of two men in the distance, who, to all appearance, were as stationary as himself, and possibly from a similar cause.

Now, the visible proof of two persons, walking in the public thoroughfare of a large city, would not, during daylight, excite any feeling of astonishment; but at the hour when my friend discovered their presence, the knowledge of the fact was the reverse of agreeable. Should they have any design upon him, what chance had he against two men, who, in all probability, were well armed, whilst he had not so much as a walking-stick wherewith to defend himself in case of emergency; yet after all, was it not possible they were harmless individuals, wending their way homeward, and probably stood at that moment in as great awe of him, as he possibly could have felt regarding them.

Thus soliloquizing, the gentleman turned towards his dwelling, and recommenced his walk, yet by no means satisfied with the appearance of the pedestrians he had discovered very now and then he looked back to ascertain if they were followed; when, to his excessive annoyance, he perceived that whether he proceeded fast or slow, the figures remained at the same distance from him as when first he noted their presence. To prove the fact more fully, my friend stopped suddenly in the middle of the street—so

## THE MALAGA ASSASSINS.

did the others; and when, determined to ascertain whether they were purposely dodging his steps, he retraced his steps and walked towards them, the figures steadily retreated as he advanced.

His feelings now partook of a sensation somewhat allied to alarm; and having by this time again reached the Consul's door, it occurred to him, that as a prudential measure, it might not be altogether unadvisable to knock, and obtain some weapon wherewith to defend himself, if attacked. With this view, he entered the lofty archway of the building, and had already raised his hand to demand admittance, when the natural aversion which a man has to being suspected of timidity, induced him to pause ere he summoned any of the inmates to his aid; besides which, the very act of the figures retiring, as if alarmed at his having turned back, was strong presumptive evidence of an anxiety on their part to avoid him, as pertinaciously as he was desirous of getting rid of them. Moreover, should it afterwards appear, that the objectionable persons were actually acquaintances of his own, the story of having called up the Consul in the middle of the night to afford him protection, would undoubtedly be published through Malaga, as a most pleasing anecdote for relation, and at the same time affording a somewhat conclusive instance as to the weakness of his nerves.

Cogitating to this effect, he released the knocker from his grasp, and was about to leave his sanctuary, which was completely hidden in shade, when his departure was arrested by hearing the sound of footsteps re-approaching, and in a few seconds the very persons he dreaded passed him by. The cautious manner in which they moved showed the little confidence they placed in the streets, and for the instant during which the solitary lamp, which is intended to illuminate the passage of our adventurer was enabled to mark their progress, he perceived that by the latter, they were evidently guided by the former, if honest men, certainly a strong indication to nature for having inscribed

"rogue" most legibly on the countenance of both; one, the least-repulsive looking of the two, was a man upwards of six feet in height, while his companion was extremely short, and gifted with as villanous a visage as could be invented for the direst imp in a Christmas pantomime.

The Spanish "*ladrón*," or robber, however, is not precisely the style of gentleman romantic young ladies are apt to imagine; neither is that most respectable member of the community correctly represented by the intellectual individuals on the London stage, who stalk forth with well-rouged faces and black moustaches, having their backs and shoulders protected with an exuberance of curls, as was the fashion in England during the days of Charles II., while on the summit of their heads what is technically termed a large Spanish hat figures to considerable advantage, ornamented with a drooping feather descending half-way to the ground. So far from such adjuncts approaching to the costume of the present day, the two worthies who, on the occasion related, stealthily trod past the Consul's door, were habited in the high steeple-crowned beaver peculiar to the province, and not unlike the sombre head gear worn by the Puritans in the time of Cromwell, saving that, instead of the enormous brim, a peculiarly fashioned and very small upturned ridge is substituted. The remaining part of the dress of the before-mentioned persons was picturesque enough, if viewed when delineated on paper, but seen in its native squalidness, was dirty and unprepossessing in the extreme.

Be it remarked, however, that round the body each wore the thick, coarse red sash, wherein it is the custom of the country to carry money, cigars, or whatever necessaries may be required not excepting the never-failing accomp his constant companion—the *cuchillo*.

Truly glad was the benighted pedestrian the departure of such undesirable companions wending their course in the direction it he deemed a few minutes well spent in

fidant that each moment would increase the distance between the strangers and himself. Thus determined, my friend remained stationary, until conjecturing the obnoxious persons must have finally departed, he noiselessly vacated the shady archway wherein he had ensconced himself, and fearlessly and rapidly passed onward in their wake.

Having been thus detained considerably longer than was his wish, the adventurer found the increasing coldness of the air, and a naturally good appetite gradually becoming sharper; and as the anticipations of rest and refreshment, which awaited him at his *posáda*, occupied his mind, he gradually increased his pace, until but the lapse of a few moments more were sufficient to bring him to his door. But such a consummation was not readily to be achieved, for when within fifty paces of his dwelling, and, grasping the latch-key in his hand, to prevent any unnecessary delay at the portal, the unhappy victim found himself, as if by magic, encircled by a pair of athletic arms, while, at the same moment, a sharp knife was passed loosely across his throat, with the assured promise, that the utterance of one syllable would most considerably increase the pressure of the blade on his neck.

So sudden and effectual was the attack, that even had the person assailed been prepared, he would have found it impossible to ward off the discourteous embrace; and when, by close scrutiny, he recognised the faces of the wanderers, and, by the smarting of the divided skin covering his windpipe, was enabled to judge pretty correctly as to their intentions, the unhappy prisoner gave himself up for lost, though determined, as far as in his power lay, to struggle to the utmost for his life.

Acting on this principle, he commenced an expostulation in far from moderate terms; but the effect of his harangue proved diametrically opposite to that expected; for, finding their prisoner silent, on exclamation, the smaller ruffian of the two thrust his hand into his sash, and pulling forth an enormous circular cork, such as is used to stop the apertures of large

oil-jars, drove it into the mouth of the sufferer, by main force, with the hilt of his knife.

The agony resulting from this operation must have been intense, for the mouth, though stretched to its utmost limits, was incapable of holding so huge a substance; the horrid consequence was, that the sides of his face were actually torn by the brutality of the wretch, and, while hardly able to breathe, the blood flowed so copiously from the wounded lips of their victim, as to place him in momentary dread of suffocation.

Then commenced a systematic pillage; and so bitterly enraged was the lesser robber at the insufficiency of the booty, notwithstanding the appropriation of a gold repeater, which, of course, fell a sacrifice to their rapacity, that, uttering a horrid imprecation, he again unclasped his knife, rushed upon his prisoner, and had it not been for the interference of his accomplice, the unfortunate object in their power would never have beheld another day. As it happened, the latter of the two bravos strenuously objected to further force being had recourse to, adding, that although their spoil had proved far less valuable than they had anticipated, yet it was worse than frivolous to add murder to robbery, since no benefit could thereby arise; but, on the contrary, the perpetration of the act might, and most probably would, lead to detection, and, consequent, strangulation for their pains.

Thus apostrophized, the greater ruffian of the two, albeit by far the smaller man, reluctantly, and with much abuse, returned his weapon to the sheath; but naturally savage, and worked up to a pitch of fiendish brutality, he thrust his bony knuckles within the neckcloth of his victim, and twisting the handkerchief with his utmost strength, would most indisputably have placed the sufferer beyond all necessity of rescue, had not the latter sinner again stepped forward and preserved the prisoner's life.

Let any one whom good fortune, has hitherto protected from

such a fate, picture to himself what the feelings of the wretched man must have been. At that hour of the night it was impossible to expect aid from any quarter, and left in the grasp of two determined villains disappointed of a rich booty, one of whom had twice attempted his destruction, what could be expected from such hands but further violence, and, in all probability, death of the most appalling description.

In a short time his person was again subjected to a rigid examination, which proving as fruitless as before, the comrades withdrew to a short distance from their prisoner, having previously warned him not to stir on peril of his life.

The dreadful gag which had been forced within his mouth occasioned intolerable anguish; his neck yet smarted from the effect of the divided skin, and the murderous grasp of the robber felt fresh upon his throat; his arms were pinioned behind, and as his persecutors stood but a few paces away, in deep and earnest consultation, the impracticability of accomplishing his escape by flight was too great, and the certainty of murder if overtaken, too undoubted to induce him to dare the risk. Presently a sound fell on his ear, and eagerly the poor wretch listened, in the faint hope that deliverance was at hand. Neither was the noise unheeded by his captors, for, bending to the ground, they endeavoured to ascertain the direction from whence the unwelcome arrival might approach. Steadily, and at measured intervals, the steps drew nigh, and at the same moment the clang of a sabre trailing on the ground, proclaimed the owner of the weapon to be armed.

"*Demonio!*" suddenly muttered the smaller ruffian, as rising from his recumbent posture he made a thrust with his knife at the unarmed prisoner, which fortunately glancing by a button of his coat, saved him from further danger than the infliction of a slight wound on the breast.

At that moment the other robber, seizing their prize by the arm with considerable violence, thrust him before them towards one of the many dark passages abounding on the spot, and

where the bright influence of the sun, even at mid-day, could scarcely lend a straggling beam to cheer the almost pitchy obscurity. To what exit could so dismal a place lead? Was it possible that an outlet beyond what the eye could scan, might place the adventurous explorer on the broad quay? or was it merely the entrance to one of those dreary and ill-ventilated vaults, leading to the stores of some affluent merchant? Of what extent the passage might have been, the captive had not the means of ascertaining, for, on proceeding about a dozen paces in the gloom, the ruffians stopped, and having placed my friend between them, and posted his back against the wall, each drew his abominable knife, and holding one of the instruments at his throat, and the other at his breast, they enjoined the deepest silence.

Louder and louder grew the echoes of the stranger's tread, as he sauntered slowly up the street; but having reached the entrance to the dark passage, where the victim and his gaolers stood secreted, the new comer made a short pause, when, having drawn his sabre, a very common and necessary precaution in similar situations, he entered the very cavern where the robbers and their charge lay *perdu*.

Although the figures of the party that first entered, owing to the extreme darkness, were invisible to the stranger, yet as he advanced, and necessarily closed up the aperture of the entrance, the outline of his form might well be traced against the uncertain lights without; and progressing onwards, his sword extended at arm's length, it may be readily surmised what were the feelings of the captive at finding aid so near, that the stranger almost touched him with his cloak; and yet, so utterly impossible was it for the miserable captive to claim the assistance, placed as it were within his grasp, that his heart sank within him, as, undiscovered by the intruder, the sound of his departure momentarily lessened in the distance.

That the passage in which they stood possessed another outlet, exclusive of that by which it had been entered, did not now





AD.

CHAMBER



scarcely had he traversed fifty yards when a sudden rush of air convinced him the opening was at hand, and in a few seconds he emerged from the lonesome avenue upon the quay, and within a few doors of the mansion he had been in quest of.

Weeks passed into months ere the evil consequences of the harsh treatment he received were obliterated from his person ; and though promises of reward were liberally offered for the detection of the parties implicated in the foul and cowardly attack, not a clue towards discovering the perpetrators could be gained ; all remained a mystery, in as far as any disclosure was effected relative to the delinquents, and as time wore on the sufferer allowed the affair to fade from his mind, and the transaction, when by accident it was called to his memory, bore relation but as an adventure which occurred in the distant days of auld lang syne.

Time, with the usual rapidity of pace, rolled onward on his course, and the evening of a beautiful summer day saw the hero of my tale landing from a well-appointed yacht, in which he had accompanied some friends to point out the beauties of Malaga.

"*Buenas dias caballeros,*" uttered some half-dozen and half-apparelled ragamuffins, to the party on stepping ashore ; and, exactly similar to the good old custom in England, each of the polite welcomers proceeded to appropriate to himself certain particles of the baggage, for the nominal purpose of conveying the articles to the domicile of the right owner, or, failing to discover his abode, purloining the property for their own use.

"I know *your* face to a certainty," exclaimed our friend of midnight suffering, to a long bony fellow, who, among the others, was laying his hands on whatever article he could seize ; "surely I've seen you before now ?"

"*No, senor, no es possible,*" calmly replied the lathy mendicant ; but my friend could not be mistaken in the man, for it was he who, although ruffian as he proved himself on the night of the adventure, more than twice preserved his life from the dagger of his companion. Under those circumstances would it

have been just to seize him on suspicion of the crime? and even had he ventured so far, what proof had he of the man's identity, saving his own bare word? None; so passing onward without further comment, he joined the party with whom he was travelling, and his first and most energetic recommendation which he uttered to each individual on reaching the Consul's, was—carefully to avoid dozing on the Alameda at midnight.

## THE CRITIQUES.

“ And is *that* all?” slowly drawled forth Colonel Offersley. “ I fully expected a good tragic end ; but, as your story runs, I cannot perceive the most remote particle in the narrative approximating to romance. Your friend, or relative, whichever he was—for you apostrophize him under both heads—appears by your explanation solely in the light of a not-over-prudent gentleman, who incautiously went to sleep in the streets, and naturally found himself not impervious to disagreeable rencontres on his way home. Am I not right?”

“ Upon my word, Offersley,” said His Excellency, “ I have seldom heard you so eloquent, and certainly never so critical in your remarks. What do you particularly object to in Mr. Fitzlay’s story ? As regards myself, I felt an interest in the fate of his friend gaining strength as his narrative proceeded. Do not the ladies coincide in my opinion ?” added his Lordship, appealing to the fair listeners.

“ Indisputably,” answered the persons addressed ; “ and assuredly, Colonel Offersley,” continued Lady Mary, in that particular winning tone of voice, which few women can command, but which when heard proves inevitably irresistible—“ most assuredly I lend my humble tribute to the praise accorded Mr. Fitzlay, for his kindness in affording us amusement by his willing acquiescence, as also by conferring on us—at least on Lady Blanche and myself—considerable pleasure in attending to the recital.”

“ I fully agree in the view taken by the ladies,” remarked Lord Ashdale ; “ and as a punishment for Offersley’s criticisms, I cite him to appear at this table, or elsewhere, as hereafter may be decided, at such time as the fair judges now present may

appoint—then and there to relate, if in his power, a better and more amusing tale.”

“Capital! excellent!” was the immediate response following his Lordship’s suggestion; and had circumstances permitted, and the ladies continued in power, Colonel Offersley would have been forthwith inducted to the office of lecturer, and been under the necessity of extemporizing on the spot.

That infliction on others, and probable fatigue to himself, was, at least for the present, postponed, by intimation from the captain of the yacht, that our short voyage had reached its termination; whereupon the penance enjoined on the Colonel was temporarily lost sight of, and every one hurried on deck to obtain a nearer view of Cadiz.

I do not imagine my readers much care to be reminded, that “*Cades*,” as it was formerly called, was built by the Carthaginians 530 years before Christ; nor hold they in revered estimation what Sir Francis Drake achieved at that port in 1587; nor what Sir George Rooke attempted, but could not do, in 1702.

Let it suffice—the tourists in due time landed, and shortly afterwards were comfortably located under the superintendence of the hospitable and universally-esteemed British Consul.

I like Cadiz; and yet it is not an over and above lively spot whereon most men would choose to pitch their tents for a permanency. Yet there are duller places than the *Calle Anchar*, with its innumerable and varied coloured articles appended at the doors and windows of the shops, left to flutter in the breeze, as attractions whereby to entrap the passers by, and levy contributions on their pockets.

No great inroad, however, was effected on the pecuniary resources of any of our party on this occasion, since it was agreed on all sides, that the period allotted for prosecuting the entire trip would hardly prove sufficient for the projected extent of tour without losing a day at Cadiz, and consequently it was carried, without a dissentient vote, that an immediate start should be made for Seville.

Of all classes of persons in the habit of apostrophizing time, none so pertinaciously expatiate on its brevity, as those possessing no object of importance whatever whereby to consume it; and so in the present case, for whether the yachts returned to Cowes one week sooner or one week later, could not by possibility have signified an iota to any one then descanting on the paucity of that commodity placed at their disposal; nevertheless they all appeared unaccountably impressed with the absolute necessity which existed for "going a-head," as the Yankees would term their unceasing restlessness.

This reminds me of a gentleman, once the golden idol of fashion, rushing up to London from Melton, in the shortest space of time it was supposed four horses with constant relays could accomplish; and indisputably the journey *was* achieved in an unprecedented brief period; but after recounting the exploit at the clubs, and expatiating on the tremendous pace at which he had travelled, the hero of the feat suddenly bethought him for what purpose had he so unnecessarily inconvenienced himself, and distressed the unhappy cattle which brought him. But as the question was considerably more easy to propound than solve, the traveller wisely surmised that the readiest way to avoid coming in contact with similar queries emanating from others, would be to place himself in his carriage once more, and return from whence he started.

\* \* \* \* \*

Our immediate departure for Seville having been determined on, little time was requisite for making the necessary arrangements, which were the more readily effected, since the heavy baggage, *sa* I may well term the innumerable servants and other appurtenances belonging to the ladies, had been previously despatched from Gibraltar to Malaga, there to await the arrival of their owners.

By the kind assistance of our proverbially-attentive and hospitable Consul, we were in brief space carefully, and with considerable ceremony, deposited on board a steamer bound for Seville,

and thus, in a few hours we were rapidly progressing towards the once capital of Spain, without one of my companions having even cared to behold the great square of St. Antonio, or expressed the slightest curiosity to visit any of the numerous sights well worth gazing at in Cadiz.

Among the passengers who thronged the deck, was an individual who evidently considered himself of no trifling importance ; and although it chanced (as already mentioned), that among the groups there were some Englishmen and English ladies, moreover, whose names held a prominent place in the pages of our peerage, no one for an instant presumed to question the superiority of the smoking Spaniard.

Nothing loath to strike awe into the minds of his companions by a declaration of his elevated position in society, we soon discovered our new acquaintance gloried in the profession of a *picador*, and was at that moment bound to the same destination as ourselves, where he assured us we should witness most excellent sport.

Having been present at many bull-fights in various parts of Spain, my fellow-travellers—I mean of course the gentlemen of the party, and myself—replied to the Spaniard's glowing anticipations of pleasure in somewhat cool and indifferent terms ; and it was not until after much questioning on our parts, and explanation on his, we were brought to comprehend, that the enjoyment in prospect was to be derived from an exhibition which had not taken place in Seville for upwards of nine years.

This pastime was termed by our new acquaintance "*El encierro*," from the fact of the people congregating early on the morning of the day when the bull-fight was to take place, for the purpose of witnessing the animals being driven into the town from the country, and eventually consigned to their various places of imprisonment, from whence they were destined to emerge during the afternoon, for the gratification of the elite of the community, and for the fulfilment of their own destined end.

Thus apprized, Lord Ashdale, Colonel Offersley, Mr. Fitzlay, and myself, resolved on joining the spectators ; and the following short account will explain, what possibly but few Englishmen have witnessed ; and when taking into consideration the savage excitement and delight which the violent death of two fellow-creatures occasioned to the mob, I much doubt whether the description of “ *El encierro* ” may not prove more palatable to my readers, than would have been the case, had they witnessed the actual representation of the tragedy.

# EL ENCIERRO.

**Seek not for danger, where there is no profit.**

*Cymbeline*



## EL ENCIERRO.

ABOUT four o'clock, a. m., while it was yet dark, we walked in the direction where, we were informed, the bulls would enter the town ; but, as yet, the gates remained closed, and nothing indicated the approaching pastime, saving the wooden rails which were erected, in order to form a sort of barrier on either side the road leading to the arena, and from whence we at length fancied could be distinguished the distant hum of voices.

To the arena we therefore bent our steps ; and, on entering the magnificent building, found it, to our unqualified astonishment, crowded in every part. It was now about five o'clock, and there could not have been less than sixteen or seventeen thousand persons present ; but, unlike the usual bull-fights, there were very few respectable looking females to be seen, though women of all ages, in the middling and lower classes, were, apparently, as anxious in the matter as the men. To obtain a seat on the benches, was a luxury not to be thought of for an instant ; therefore, judging anything to be better than waiting in the centre of the circle for the arrival of the bulls, we leapt upon the barriers which enclose the *plaza*, and there patiently awaited the issue.

The spot we chose for our resting-place, was immediately in front of the cathedral ; and, as the sun, slowly rising, shed his early beams on the magnificent edifice, and brought distinctly

to view, the immense mass of human beings wedged into a dense crowd, the effect was grand in the extreme.

As day-light gradually broke, so did the animal spirits of the assembled multitude find vent; and shouts, cries, and noises of all descriptions, were gratuitously sent forth, for the edification of the more peaceably inclined.

The facetious jokes and witticisms unsparingly lavished on whatever, for the moment, struck the fancy of the mob, would not, perhaps, allow of literal translation; but, among others, they cried loudly to Colonel Offersley, desiring him to take off his hat; whether they had an inclination to judge of the mode in which his hair was cut, or otherwise, to him was all the same, since, not understanding a syllable they uttered, he would speedily have brought down their wrath upon his devoted head, had he not eventually been apprized of their desire, when, acceding to the demand, he was rewarded with repeated cheers.

The next object which attracted notice, was the garment of a somewhat antiquated dame, which the sovereign people, with repeated shouts and screams demanded should be cast away. How the mandate was to be obeyed I was curious to witness—the more so as the lady remained stubborn and callous to the yells, which on all sides assailed her.

At last, as is generally the custom in like cases, a gallant individual stepped forward, and gratuitously offered his services in adjusting her toilet. Whereupon, the female amateur, waxing wroth, by way of retaliation, seized upon a handsome young fellow seated beside her, and digging both teeth and nails into his smart *zamorra* jacket, speedily convinced her tormentors that she was not to be assailed with impunity.

The hint thus thrown out was not lost on her persecutors, who, forthwith turned their attention to some safer and less ferocious object, whereon to practice their tyranny.

Their desire was soon gratified in the person of an unfortunate peasant, who, having refused compliance with the oft-repeated demand to doff his jacket, was instantly assailed. One

blow brought on another; and, within a minute, the wretched mortal was divested of every stitch of clothing which covered his person on entering the *plaza*, whereupon he was energetically, and not very civilly, instantly kicked out of the circle.

For myself, a huge-whiskered charcoal-burner, unshaved and unwashed, expressed his caprice in desiring I should amuse the company by springing a monstrous rattle, somewhere about three times the size of those which the ancient watchmen were wont to carry in the bygone days in London. To refuse would have been the height of folly; and, since acquiescence could not add very greatly to the horrible uproar, I seized the instrument, and exerting all my strength, raised a din that might have been heard from one end of Seville to the other.

Until eight o'clock the various noises continued; when a *picador* galloping at full speed into the ring, gave token that the animals were near.

The mode of decoying them is simply this:—driven quietly from the country in herds—bulls, heifers, and oxen together—towards the gates of the town, no sooner are the portals opened than, seeing a clear space before them, they invariably rush in; when to entice them further, a *picador* well-mounted is stationed between the rails on each side the street. No sooner have the cattle entered, than the gates close in their rear; when finding retreat impossible, the animals generally set off at full speed in chase of the mounted man, who immediately puts spurs to his horse, and dashes forward. Should the steed fall, or by any accident was he to be overtaken, his chance of life would be small indeed; but as the men are generally well-mounted on these occasions, such a catastrophe is of very rare occurrence.

The moment the rider appeared, a silence, as of death, succeeded the din, which for hours previously had been maintained; not a syllable was uttered; and in breathless expectation, the living mass, as of one accord, bent their heads towards the entrance, whence the bulls were expected.

The horseman who had ridden in, now joined a group of others, similarly accoutred with himself, together with numerous persons on foot, whose business it was to aid in forcing the animals into the different stalls, which branch out from behind the opposite side of the building to that where they enter.

The most intense anxiety was universally manifested for the arrival of the bulls; neither had the spectators to suffer long suspense, for almost instantaneously with the appearance of the cavalier, in rushed about nineteen or twenty infuriated brutes, eight of whom were destined to captivity and death.

For an instant the animals stopped short, and, as if cowed at the scene they so suddenly beheld, evinced, by their movements, a desire to retreat. Then, with one accord, the huge mass of human beings exalted their voices, and, shouting to their utmost power, the bewilderment of the creatures speedily gave place to fury, as maddened by the deafening uproar, they dashed recklessly at whatever object most prominently attracted their notice.

This was the period for forcing them to their destined imprisonment, which, when accomplished, the bulls were easily secured, while the others, not then required, were driven forth into the country.

It does not, however, follow, that the animals are sufficiently tractable and complaisant, to take up their abodes exactly according to the wish of their captors; and on this occasion, one furious brute determined to assert his independence. Instead, therefore, of following the creatures which preceded him, the bull fixed his gaze on an unfortunate connoisseur, who, wrapped in contemplation of his own fanciful costume and anticipated conquests, was slowly crossing the arena; his back was towards the savage animal, and wholly unconscious of the danger which threatened him, when, in far less time than is occupied in recording the tragedy, the animal dashed at full speed towards the doomed man. Involuntarily a shout of warning arose from the excited multitude, but the caution came too late. For a

moment, the *aficionado* cast his eyes around, to gather the meaning of the sudden tumult, and hardly could he have discovered the imminent peril in which he stood, when the horns of the savage brute pressed against his back, and instantaneously he was gored through the body, cast upon the ground, and literally trampled to death. As if doubly excited by the sight of the blood he had caused to flow, the animal held on his career, and, notwithstanding the horrid butchery which had that moment been enacted, the whole populace burst out into an uncontrollable shout of merriment, on seeing another individual spin through the air by the exertions of the bull, his legs and arms extended, as though in the act of flying, and preserving his equilibrium throughout his disagreeable and compulsory journey. When, however, he again reached the ground, the noise which the falling of his body caused, convinced us he was dead; but never were we further from the truth, for, after two or three attempts to regain his equilibrium, he succeeded in placing himself upon his legs, and started off for the barrier, little anxious to prosecute a further acquaintance with his assailant.

Three men were so seriously hurt as to render it necessary to have them carried away; and before the bull could be secured, a second wretch fell a sacrifice to his fury. During the whole of this disgusting scene, the passions of the populace rose to a pitch of excitement truly horrible. They yelled and shouted like so many possessed fiends; and when at last the *plaza* was cleared of their four-footed friends, they vehemently expressed their determination to have one of the captured animals again brought forth for their amusement. In course of time the demand was complied with; and in hopes of pacifying their outrageous and unreasonable requests, the animal was handed over to their tender mercies, for the purpose of being dealt with as they deemed best. No further accident, however, occurred worthy of note; and, after much bungling and uproar, the amateur *matador* passed his sword through the bull's shoulder, and finally deprived him of life. •

Still unsatiated with the butchery they had witnessed, the people called loudly for more ; but as the proprietors could not afford to sacrifice a second brute to the caprice of the mob, who paid nothing, instead of waiting for the evening's exhibition, when a rich harvest was looked for, the demand was met by a prompt refusal.

This was the signal for a row ; and had not a detachment of infantry marched into the arena, it would be difficult to surmise to what extent the infuriated rage of the miscreants might not have been carried. As it was, the circumstance of the soldiers deliberately loading with ball, caused a sudden and complete revulsion of feeling, for in brief space the *Plaza de Toros* was as silent and forsaken as is the case during the very depth of winter.

Thus terminated this curious and revolting exhibition. Being anxious to see how the bull which had slain the men would acquit himself in the evening, I attended the fight ; but, from some cause or other, the animal was inert and sluggish, and, apparently, wholly deficient of that ferocity which in the morning had been so fatally displayed.

As to the true cause of the sudden and surprising change, I cannot speak with confidence, though it is generally believed, that in most instances, prior to the bull being let loose, a heavy weight is dropped upon his loins, thereby depriving him of a considerable portion of strength, and consequently rendering him a far less formidable antagonist than he proves to be when first driven in from the country.

## MORNING REFLECTIONS.

DISGUSTED as we were at the exhibition, and weary from having been up the greater part of the night, subject all the while to the unceasing shouts and piercing cries of the refuse of the town, most gladly would we have retired to our *posada*, if possible to obtain some rest ; but the lateness of the hour peremptorily forbid the indulgence of such a luxury ; moreover, the ladies might be expected to make their appearance in an hour or so, their nocturnal hours having unquestionably been better, and far more profitably expended, than had been the case with the same portion of time appropriated by the gentlemen of the party.

Many days intervened before I could obliterate from my mind the remembrance of the wretched man's countenance, when turning round he beheld the infuriated bull behind him, at the very same instant when the horns of the animal gored him to death ; it was a horrid spectacle, and such as I hope never to behold more, although the whole proceeding appeared to afford the unwashed denizens of Seville unmitigated delight.

Of course it was agreed on all sides to conceal our adventure from the knowledge of the ladies ; *nominally*, for fear a detail of the melancholy catastrophe might cast a shade over their anticipated amusements for the day ; but I firmly believe in *reality*, because no one was ready to boast of having directly or indirectly countenanced the brutal exhibition we had just witnessed.

Whatever the true motive for our silence on that particular subject might have been, the result fully answered our wishes, since by the time we effected a somewhat necessary change in our outward appearance, we were summoned to the breakfast room, where the ladies had already assembled, their countenances radiant with smiles, a thousand times enhanced by that peculiar

loveliness of complexion, which no nation upon earth can boast of possessing, saving our own beautiful and unequalled country-women.

As a matter of course, the programme for the morning's occupation was speedily brought on the tapis, and the cathedral and the royal palace were simultaneously declared first on the list for investigation.

"I would not omit paying a visit to the cathedral on any account," observed Lord Ashdale; "for, if report speaks truth, the organ contains 5300 pipes, and above 100 stops; it must be a magnificent instrument. I should most exceedingly like to try it."

"And I dare say you will be able to accomplish your wish, and that too without much difficulty," remarked His Excellency; "for I am greatly mistaken if half-a-dozen dollars will not introduce you to the organist's seat in a very few seconds after making your application."

"Undoubtedly, my Lord," said Mr. Fitzlay; "and in this region of romance, as it is termed, I much fear I belie not the present generation, when I state my conviction, that money will obtain for the possessor of the coveted coin, free ingress to whatever spot he may care to point the golden wand to."

"I believe your assertion to be generally correct, Fitzlay," replied the Marquis; "yet there *are* exceptions to the rule; for example, money will not obtain admission to the convents."

"To some, certainly not," answered the party addressed; "though I believe bribery has proved fully adequate for that purpose before now."

"How I wish we could see the interior of a convent," exclaimed the lovely Lady Blanche, delighted at the idea of enjoying such a novelty.

"I had rather see a convent with its abbess and real nuns, than walk over fifty palaces," chimed in Lady Mary; "surely we might find some means of gaining access?" and bending on the man of languages one of her most fascinating smiles, the

enchancing interrogator archly added, "Did you not just now observe, Mr. Fitzlay, that such an adventure might be accomplished?"

I don't know what our interpreter thought at the moment, but it certainly occurred to me, that to gain such a smile as the one beaming on the almost angelic countenance of the beautiful girl then speaking, there were very few things indeed *I* would not have attempted in her behalf.

And possibly so thought Mr. Fitzlay, for rising from his chair he was about to give utterance to his thoughts, when he was checked by His Excellency, who laughingly observed there was not the slightest occasion for his friend to put himself to inconvenience, by endeavouring to obtain such permission, since it fortunately happened the means of accomplishing that object was already placed at his own disposal.

"How delightful!" cried Lady Mary; "the very thing of all others I should most wish to behold. But where is the convent? when are we to go?"

"Shall we see the nuns unveiled?" asked Lady Blanche.

"Have they an organ?" inquired Lord Ashdale.

"I dare say most of them have taken the vows compulsorily?" musingly remarked the Colonel.

"Upon my word," exclaimed the Marquis, "how is it possible I can reply to so many queries, and all propounded simultaneously? But if you will spare me a few moments, I will explain all I am cognizant of in the matter.

"My friend Mr. Fitzlay well knows it is not a common occurrence, for strangers of either sex to obtain entrance to the interior of a Spanish convent beyond the grating; and for a man to enjoy such a privilege, is almost unprecedented; yet, as I concluded our fair companions might peradventure, on beholding the outside, experience an inclination to visit the interior of a monastic building, I made such arrangements before quitting Gibraltar, as, I am delighted to inform you, have proved successful; and you will doubtless be gratified to learn I have

obtained permission for myself and party to visit the Convent of Santa Inez."

Nothing could have proved more consonant with the feelings of the travellers, than the welcome information thus conveyed by the gallant Marquis; and each individual anxious to take advantage of the opportunity offered, the *cortège* soon collected, and in high spirits we started on our visit to—*The Convent of Santa Inez*.

# THE CONVENT OF SANTA INEZ.

Oh, there was not the thing on earth  
Created, that he would not dare,  
'To cast the faintest gleam of mirth  
On that loved brow, so truly fair.

*The Beauty of the Rhine.*



## THE CONVENT OF SANTA INEZ.

THE architecture of the building, dedicated to the use of the holy sisters, was evidently of Moorish origin, but in outward semblance the edifice partook more of the appearance of a private mansion, than of a sanctuary. The ornamental sculpture adorning the entrance gate was rapidly decaying from age and exposure, yet the interior was comfortable and commodious, and apparently, in all respects, clean to the most fastidious eye ; the *patio*, or court-yard, was extensive, and filled with shrubs and flowers of different hues and perfumes, while in the centre an elaborately-chiselled fountain threw upwards, in various directions, the cool clear water, which presently descending into the large marble basin beneath, added the silvery sound of the plashing jets as a pleasing interruption to the otherwise-unvarying stillness that reigned around.

The inmates of the mansion consisted, in number, of the Lady Abbess and twenty-seven nuns, habited in long blue garments, having a broad white border round the breast, and also across the forehead, the whole surmounted with a black veil ; on the left side each of the fair devotees wore an embroidered symbol of their faith ; and though veracity compels me to acknowledge the ladies I was permitted to behold were neither young nor beautiful, I have reason to imagine the more attractive members of the sisterhood were purposely kept out of sight—

the more so, since of the twenty-seven nuns, of which the establishment consisted, only nineteen were permitted to appear.

The rules of this order are extremely severe—the female relations even of the recluses being prohibited from entering the walls, except at stated periods, and then under stringent regulations, which must be rigidly adhered to. Formerly the convent possessed great wealth, but in late years it has shared the common fate of other religious establishments, and is now in possession of nothing beyond what an occasional charity may offer.

The nuns appeared cheerful and contented, and having shewn their refectory, voluntarily led the party to inspect the different rooms in the building. The dormitory was the most singular, being a long and very broad apartment, where the whole of the sisterhood slept, yet the partitions were so arranged, that neither could see each other, unless such was their wish; and, in an extensive passage adjoining, a large bath was prepared for the comfort of each individual, and for her exclusive use.

After following our conductress through the numerous rooms of the building, we were shewn the chapel where the founder of the institution reposes in a glass case, the body being richly apparelled in garments of a sky-blue colour, thickly fringed with silver; sufficient remains to indicate the features, and immediately under the right eye a mark may readily be distinguished, proving, that when living, the person must have suffered some disfigurement.

“There,” exclaimed the Lady Abbess, pointing towards the splendidly-carved coffin, “there reposes all that now remains of the munificent founder of the convent; rich, beautiful, and young, she sacrificed all that mortals most care for in existence, and dedicated her enormous wealth, and the greater portion of her days, to the observance of the only true worship, and the glory of our patron saint.”

“Surely,” observed Lady Mary, “some more than common occurrence must have instigated one so gifted as you describe

voluntarily to forsake the world, and bury herself for ever in a cloister ?”

“ True, *senorita*,” was the reply ; “ and circumstances of no trifling interest caused the sacrifice, for which she has long, ere now, reaped the blessed recompence of Paradise ;” and here the old lady paused in her narration, for the purpose of signing various crosses on her brow and bosom, while she muttered inaudible prayers between her closed teeth.

“ The mark whereby her lovely features were for ever disfigured,” resumed our guide, “ may yet be seen deeply engraven on the skin ; and though upwards of two hundred years have passed since the body was consigned to that case, the scar yet remains visible. Prior to that period, the corpse having been embalmed, was buried in the chapel of our House ; but in the sixteenth century it was rescued from the tomb, and has ever since remained as now you see it.”

From this imperfect description, it may readily be supposed the visitors were anxious to learn the history of the shrivelled form we then gazed at, and with very little entreaty, the Superior kindly related the following facts :—

“ Our convent, as you are aware,” commenced the old lady, “ is dedicated to Santa Inez, and in the latter part of the fourteenth century it was founded by Dona Maria, the last surviving branch of the noble family of Coronela.

“ By records yet in our possession, it is proved that the lady in question was distinguished, not only in Seville, but generally throughout Spain, for the exceeding beauty of her countenance, the symmetry of her figure, and, above all, for the incomparable sweetness and amiability of her disposition.

“ To these great personal, as well as mental attractions, must be added, the not inconsiderable advantage of immense wealth, which, for generations, had annually been increasing, and was now placed solely at her uncontrolled disposal.

“ On the site where we now stand, the princely mansion of the family of Coronela was erected ; and at the period I

refer to, all that their illustrious predecessors could, from time to time, have boasted, whether as regarded rank, wealth, or honour, devolved upon a lovely and unprotected girl.

“To me,” continued the nun, “the world and all its vain frivolities speed by unheeded; and, even did my vow sanction the indulgence, I would not voluntarily barter the quiet routine of my present existence, for all the feverish anxieties and miscalled pleasures the universe could offer beyond these gates. To you, I doubt not, such a life must appear naturally monotonous and irksome in the extreme; but for one who has outlived all that makes vitality valuable, small gratification would be afforded by mixing with the busy throngs, and viewing the blighted hopes and bitter disappointments to which every mortal must be amenable; and that, too, when the knowledge is ever present to my mind, that what once gilded existence with happiness, now lies buried in the cold tomb for ever:” and passing her handkerchief across her aged, yet still handsome features, the Abbess appeared, by the action, as if anxious to banish some painful recollection, which, in despite of all her efforts, weighed heavily upon her mind.

Possibly, I might have been mistaken, but, methought, something approaching to a tear trembled in the old lady’s eyelids; and wherefore might it not have been so? what was the history of her who was then about to relate, probably, the unhappy story of another? Was it not possible, that the attenuated figure then seated before me, might, in the happy days of innocence and youth, have lavished all the affection of woman’s passionate and unselfish love on some *one* object, whom her last utterance would lead us to suppose had preceded her to that grave, whither, in the common course of nature, she must herself so soon be carried? Might it not have been in the power of that meek and patiently-enduring woman to speak of vows broken, affections crushed and blighted in the bud, and to expatiate, from woful experience, on the many miseries unavoidable in this chequered sphere, and which, on

some devoted heads, fall with such apparent merciless and overwhelming force? Mild and placid as was the demeanour of the venerable nun at that moment, who could say what withering effect unbridled and stormy passions might not have achieved on the heart and feelings of her former life, and possibly have instigated her, when suffering under powerful excitement, to seek shelter and obscurity in the dull routine of a monastic existence?

There was something in the old lady's countenance irresistibly touching and interesting, and the mild plaintive tone in which she uttered her remarks, and continued the narrative, attracted our undivided attention. I should have much wished to have heard the story of her life, but as the narration was not volunteered, it was impossible for any of the party to make so abrupt a request; I therefore recalled my wandering imaginations from the mental cogitations in which I was indulging, and resumed my attention to the speaker.

"With the advantages I have enumerated," observed the Abbess, continuing the thread of her history, "it could not be otherwise, but that the hand of this fair creature should eagerly have been sought in marriage by some of the proudest and most noble cavaliers in Spain; many were, undoubtedly, actuated by love of gold, while others strove to obtain the prize through vanity, and a narrow-minded anxiety to overreach their competitors, alike regardless of the happiness, or otherwise, of the cause of so much contention and ill will. 'Tis probable, and, in all likelihood, there *were* some few who gladly would have encountered danger and privation for the possession of so inestimable a jewel—for dull and insensible to female loveliness must that man have been, who could gaze on the surpassing beauty of Dona Maria, without experiencing that thrilling sensation of pleasure, which the sight of female perfection never fails to awaken:" and here the Abbess, evidently forgetful of her recently expressed contempt for all transitory advantages, slightly\*inclined her head towards the

ladies of our party, indicative of the applicability of the compliment to her guests.

“ Yet amid the throng of courtly nobles and gallant cavaliers who daily poured forth their homage at the feet of the young heiress, none found favour in her sight beyond what courtesy and a proper sense of her own position naturally pointed out as their due.

“ It was not by the galaxy of splendour, or the polished phrase of the courtier, that the heart of Dona Maria was to be obtained; she needed something beyond the mere sound of empty flattery and fulsome adulation; and surrounded as she was by sycophants and mercenary menials, it appears almost miraculous that she was able to withstand the temptations and unceasing solicitations by which she was hourly persecuted.

“ Yet though the numerous admirers who continually forced themselves on her notice met no encouragement, still there was *one* being in existence whose every wish and slightest word was, in her estimation, of far greater consequence than would have been the possession of the oppressive splendour by which she was surrounded. Neither was he whom she had singled out unworthy of her love; for, if reciprocal affection can repay attachment, her predilection in favour of her choice was well and fervently returned.

“ Don Velez de Cabra, though of good family, could not aspire to relationship with the more exalted branches of the aristocracy, whose importunities so greatly annoyed his adored mistress; and though willingly as he would have stepped boldly forward and openly avowed his attachment, yet were they fully aware of the inefficacy of such a step, and, moreover, confident of the destruction which such a declaration would inevitably bring down on one or both.

“ In those lawless days, when the instigation of the passions formed the impulse by which men generally acted, the knowledge that so insignificant a being as Don Velez de Cabra formed the slightest impediment to the gratification of the

nobles, would have been tantamount to signing his death warrant; but in this instance there arose an obstacle to their happiness of far greater import than any which the nobility might have attempted, and that was in the person of Peter, surnamed 'the cruel,' King of Castile.

"Of a fierce, perfidious, and sanguinary disposition, the son of Alphonso the Eleventh is described as having been the possessor of every diabolical propensity which could disgrace the lowest grades of humanity. Bloodthirsty, avaricious, and ever in the practice of acts the most deceitful and mean, his reign was one continued series of butchery and rebellion, which finally terminated in a sudden and violent death, through the corruption of Du Guesclin, and by the hand of Henry, Count of Transtamure.

"The miserable fate of *Blanche*, sister of the Queen of France, as also that of his second wife, *Dona Joanna*, the sister of *Don Ferdinand de Gastro*, bear sufficient testimony as to the character of the King; and in no one instance does it appear that he ever permitted himself to be influenced by any of the softer feelings of human nature, if we except his undissembled grief on the demise of his beautiful favourite, *Dona Maria Padilla*, to obtain whom he had gone through the mummery of a private marriage.

"It was about three years after the decease of his mistress that the lovely orphan was apprized of the distinguished honour which had fallen to her share in having attracted the admiration of the sovereign, a condescension as deadly fatal in its results, as repugnant to the feelings of any woman possessing a particle of proper pride and honour. Unfriended, and, in the true acceptance of the word, uncared for, save by one who dared not openly espouse her cause, and who, moreover, could seldom find opportunity of aiding, even by his counsel, the actions of the young creature who looked to him, and to him only for support, she knew not in what way to avert the loathed persecutions with which she found herself becoming hourly more encircled.

“ One by one her other suitors dropped off ; for when the bent of the King’s inclination was made manifest, bold indeed must that man have been who dared openly or by intrigue attempt to thwart the plans of their sovereign.

“ Once, and once only, had the tyrant gained access to the presence of the object of his passion ; and from the unblushing effrontery of his proposal on that occasion, the young orphan resolved that nothing within her control should induce her to submit to a second interview. Stratagem upon stratagem had been devised by the hired agents of the monarch, to obtain access to the mansion ; but notwithstanding their efforts, each endeavour had hitherto ended in disappointment to their employer.

“ Baffled in his attempts, and circumvented in his plans, whereby he hoped to attain the object of his wishes, Peter lavished upon his satellites threats and promises in profusion, for the greater and more insurmountable appeared the difficulty, the more determined was the despot to reach his end.

“ Spies and emissaries of every description were called into play, and, through the influence of gold, it was at length discovered, that during the refreshing period succeeding the bright sunset of that climate, the unprotected object of Peter’s unholy love, was accustomed to stroll through the shady groves of her garden, where she would remain in the enjoyment of the evening breeze, and amid the sweet perfume of flowers, leaning in unreserved confidence on the arm of some more favoured cavalier.

“ Princes are not proverbial for the apathy with which they learn others dare to cross their path, either in ambition, or in love, and the knowledge that a rival existed, lit up in the breast of the monarch a flame of passion, which only could be quenched in blood. Who the cavalier might prove to be, his myrmidons failed to discover ; but that a man existed, with hardihood sufficient to usurp the place of the King of Castile in the affections of a woman, and one, moreover, whom he had long since marked as his prey, was an act of arrogant presumption

and boldness, which, it was resolved, should meet with such chastisement, as the despot was wont to bestow on those who excited his wrath.

“ The streets of Seville were fast thinning on a lovely summer’s night ; the echo of the evening vespers from the surrounding monasteries, had long since died into silence, and nothing, save the cool plashing of the fountains, and slight rustling of the foliage, met the ear, as the refreshing breeze gently stirred the branches of the white-blossomed orange-tree, and the thickly-covered valambrosa ; the sound of the guitar, and the cheerful accompaniment of the castinets, were hushed, and quiet reigned over the city.

“ Yet were not all the inhabitants of fair Seville buried in repose, for by the velvet parterre of the garden we have already mentioned, two figures might have been discerned by the pale moonlight: the graceful mantilla of the one, at once proclaimed a woman, who paced with slow steps the gravel walk, and by the dubious light, which the moon cast on her white brow, the face of the lady beamed surpassingly handsome. Her companion was a young and gallantly-attired cavalier, splendidly arrayed in the gorgeous costume of the day, and the long single feather drooping from his jewelled hat, showed him as belonging to no inferior grade.

“ Slowly, and for a time in silence, they paced the shady avenue ; some painful subject evidently occupied their thoughts, for, as her companion slightly pressed the small hand within his grasp, the expression on the lady’s countenance, when turning her beauteous face towards him, told she had been weeping ; nor was that all, for ever and anon, the manly bosom of her friend moved, as though labouring with some deep anguish, while the heavy sigh, which occasionally left his lips, denoted a mind but ill at ease.

‘ Maria, my own, my beloved Maria !’ at length the latter exclaimed, gently drawing the slight form of his companion more closely to his side, ‘ readily will I allow t

argument you have adduced; yet to me nothing appears more certain, than the destruction which indisputably must await your tarrying here. Surrounded as you are by innumerable spies, how can you avoid the machinations of your enemies but by flight; and wherefore should you hesitate to embrace the only alternative yet left? You plead the indelicacy of the act, and the evil constructions which others may attach to your departure; but as long as your own approving conscience acknowledges the rectitude of your actions, you should banish all idea of the former, and the opinion of your tormentors should be treated with contempt.'

'Nay, but,' replied the agitated girl, 'ponder for an instant. How would it be possible for one so young and inexperienced as I am, to struggle against the taunts and malicious falsehoods, which unsparingly will be showered on my actions, the moment my retreat from Seville is discovered? You, and you alone, my best and dearest adviser, know the dreadful persecution to which I am momentarily subjected, and from which, alas! I behold no prospect of escape. All powerful, and tyrant, as the King is, think you, for an instant, he would hesitate in checking my departure? And should *you* be discovered as a participator in the deed, too well I foresee the return your generous and devoted attachment would experience.'

'But wherefore *should* we be detected, Maria?' eagerly exclaimed her companion; "why think on evils which, in more than human probability, never can occur? Nay, so far from anticipating failure, I feel, and conscientiously cherish, a strong presentiment of success; and if I could but obtain your sanction to the plan, but a very few hours should elapse, ere I would place you free and in safety from the power of your foe.'

'Santa Maria,' murmured the timid girl, trembling, 'Santa Maria, but should we be discovered?'

'Do not prognosticate misfortune, my beloved,' was the instant rejoinder; 'rather than remain here and court danger under the faint semblance of security, your instant withdrawal offers

the only chance by which future misery can be averted: remember, moreover, that from the happy hour when first you promised to become mine, I may justly claim you as my wife—the one sole adored object of my existence. For reasons, which, alas! bear not an instant's doubt, I am debarred the greatest felicity I could covet, in publicly proclaiming you my bride, and therefore do I urge you to this step, confident that an open declaration of my deep-rooted attachment would separate us in this world for ever; yet, remember, Maria, the power of our persecutor extends not throughout the globe—the scene of his cruelties is circumscribed—his power to do evil limited: other countries exist, where, in safety and in happiness, we may dwell in uninterrupted felicity, until the hour of death; and though you lose some portion of the splendour by which you are now surrounded, whatever recompence my poor affection can afford shall unceasingly be devoted to watch and guard over the inestimable treasure I shall then possess;" and drawing the weeping girl to his bosom, he slowly bent his head, and imprinted an affectionate kiss on her fair forehead.

'I believe, and believe truly,' replied the timid being, extricating herself from his fervent embrace, 'that in your kindness and constant attachment, I shall ever find more than an equivalent for the regret which I naturally must experience on quitting the loved home of my ancestors. But for the empty splendour you allude to, none can hold such paltry vanities in less estimation than they are regarded by myself; willingly—nor do I hesitate in acknowledging it,' she added, holding out her delicate and exquisitely formed hand towards him, 'willingly would I rely on *your* protection, go where I may. It is not doubt on that head which makes me hesitate; it is the horrible foreboding of what may be *your* fate should our plans of escape—nay, even our acquaintance be divulged,' and as the certain result of such a discovery crossed her mind, a shudder, prompted by the anticipation of possible detection, agitated her frame. 'Who can tell,' she again resumed, 'who may say how

long these stolen interviews shall pass unnoticed, and yet evade the prying eyes of some interested person? Were our meetings to become known, would they not be accounted as crimes of the deepest stain? though, Holy Virgin,' she added, turning her brilliant eyes, suffused with tears, towards Heaven, 'blessed Virgin, were it not for this one tried friend, and beloved companion thou hast vouchsafed me, where could the poor orphan look for consolation in affliction, and advice in the hour of need? And yet it is selfish, basely selfish on my part to sanction, even for an instant, the awful risk you encounter for my sake, and at this very instant how can we feel confident but that other ears are now listening to our words—Santa Maria!' almost screamed the terrified maiden, grasping her lover's arm 'Santa Maria, saw you not that figure standing almost within my reach?'

'What figure?' eagerly replied her protector; 'you are agitated, my beloved, and reluctant as I am to tear myself away, this adored form which I now clasp is far too fragile to be subjected to the rude night breeze. Come, my betrothed bride, banish such groundless alarm, and let me lead you towards the entrance of your mansion.'

'No, no,' timidly replied the young creature, still clinging to him for support, 'it was no false alarm, no foolish imagining on my part; but the figure of a man, I as distinctly saw, as I now behold you, while the face was completely hidden in the folds of his cloak. Even now the person must be close to where we stand; and, oh! if it should be some accomplice of my enemy, then are we lost indeed. There may be others also seeking your destruction—then fly, I implore you fly, while yet the power to escape remains!'

'Be he what he may,' exclaimed the cavalier, supporting his lovely charge with his left arm, and drawing his rapier—'if, as you surmise, some skulking spy lurks within the precincts of your abode, my blade and his blood shall soon prove better acquainted. Ay, be he who he may,' he continued, raising

his voice, 'where he even the foul fiend, or what is worse, that demon in human shape, Peter himself, I would not be debarred from exercising my revenge;' and making a step forward he plunged his sword into the thicket where his betrothed had fancied she beheld the appearance of the figure; but ere the weapon reached the leaves of the close entangled foliage, a man sprang from behind the shrub, and grasping the cavalier by the cloak, uttered a shrill whistle, and almost instantaneously the two lovers were surrounded by several persons, each well armed and masked.

"One moment's glance towards him who had summoned so many to his aid was sufficient to assure Dona Maria that her expectations of future happiness were now blighted for ever, and clasping her hands in agony together, in a voice of mingled horror and despair, she exclaimed, 'It is the King!'

'Or rather,' added Peter, in the slow accents of concentrated rage, 'rather apply the epithet which your paramour has thought fit to affix to our name!' And signing to his attendants, the discomfited cavalier was in an instant disarmed, and with his wrists tightly bound together, he awaited in silence the sentence, which, with good reason, he imagined would speedily be pronounced.

'At length,' continued the tyrant, addressing himself to the terrified and bewildered girl, 'at length we have ascertained that the supposed immaculate and virtuous Dona Maria deigns to bestow some portion of her smiles on a gay and favoured cavalier, though her rightful sovereign may not be deemed worthy of her notice; and while with haughty and well-assumed airs of offended virtue, the King's favour is rejected, the low caresses of a base-born menial are preferred to the honours which compliance would inevitably have lavished. From this moment, other and more certain measures shall be adopted; no longer will we suffer the hypocritical lamentations of duplicity to turn us from our fixed resolution, and whatever evil may accrue therefrom, must be attributed to the detection of the deceit,

which, for so long and so successfully, you have practised against us. At last our eyes are opened, and the honour of your house for ever tarnished.'

'Dishonour!' exclaimed the captive cavalier; 'who dare couple the foul word dishonour with the name of the pure being whom your cruelty has so pertinaciously haunted? Nay, nay,' exclaimed the youth, maddened to phrenzy, as the probable fate of his beloved mistress passed through his mind, 'knit not your brow at me, Sir King, and lay your trembling hands upon your sword when an unarmed and manacled man stands unresistingly exposed to your vengeance. Full well am I aware that nothing can be expected from *your* clemency as regards myself; but with respect to *her*,' he continued in a voice scarcely audible from passion, 'remember—and let my words sink deep into your soul—that the slightest injury or insult offered to her person, ay, or even should one hair of her head be hurt through your instrumentality, there exists not a noble throughout Spain—there breathes not a woman in your whole dominions, who will not, when the foul action becomes known, loathe, and curse the name of the cowardly author of the outrage; from city unto city shall the tale be told, till at last retributive justice too long delayed, shall mete out to you that punishment, which so frequently and so undeservedly you have heaped upon your innocent and defenceless victims.'

'Silence, audacious babbler!' exclaimed the King, in an uncontrollable burst of fury; 'silence! or by the blood of every saint in the calendar, your base calumny shall cease by death.'

'The base and cowardly alone fear the sacrifice you threaten,' indignantly exclaimed the other: 'and if by my murder I could ensure safety for the unprotected being now beside me, willingly would I bare my breast to your blade, and readily resign my existence in so good a cause.'

'Silence the traitor!' wrathfully replied Peter, turning to his attendants; and then directing his words to Dona Maria, continued—'We know not, neither heed we, who this fretful boy





may be; but thus far will we prove the fallacy of his accusations as regards ourselves; for, although sensible as he must be that we possess the power—ay, and somewhat of the inclination also—to punish his presumption on the spot, yet will we grant him free permission to depart hence, unscathed, unquestioned, and unwatched, provided the terms we once offered are by you now accepted. This is no time to bandy words in useless expostulation and entreaties: the night wears apace—further deceit is unavailing—the life or death of this impetuous fool rests in your hands; and, for the last time, we demand your instant decision. Yet, pause awhile, and remember well with whom you have to cope. No longer will we deign to sue in suppliant accents for favours, which while believing you innocent we refrained from enforcing; but, on the contrary, you now stand exposed and detected in your evil course, and may your good sense incline you to arrive at that determination only which can ensure your paramour's existence, and will, moreover, entail honour and distinction on yourself.

‘Heed not his words, Maria—heed not the base villain!’ energetically exclaimed the captive, vainly struggling with his guards to regain his freedom. ‘The word of *this* King never was by him held sacred, when his evil inclinations prompted to falsehood; nor will a single cavalier in all Castile attach the least importance to his plighted faith. Lose not a thought on me, my beloved Maria, I implore you! Better, far better is it to die, rather than to live dishonoured; and, trusting by my death to avert what might otherwise be your fate when left in his merciless hands, voluntarily do I resign life, hoping by the sacrifice to ensure preservation from evil in behalf of my affianced wife.’

‘Then have thy wish,’ exclaimed the King, uncaring to stop his rapidly-rising choler, ‘have then thy wish!’ and ere an arm could be extended to avert the blow, the body of the pinioned and defenceless cavalier lay weltering in its gore, the reeking dagger of Peter having found a resting place within his heart.

‘So perish all foul traitors!’ exclaimed the king, as deliberately he withdrew the instrument of death from the convulsed body. But where,’ he continued, looking hastily round, ‘where is the cause of all this midnight revel? By the Holy Virgin, she has fled! haste—all of you, haste! The lady cannot be far off; and rich reward shall be showered on him who brings her to my arms—away!’

“Poor Maria! hardly knowing whether the scene before her was an ideal creation of her disordered brain, or the actual performance of a dreadful tragedy, her reason for the time gave way. Fixed and glassy were her eyes as they rested on her lover’s form, now motionless in death; her cheeks were blanched and pale as the purest marble; her hands closely pressed together, and the deep heaving of her bosom alone told that the beautiful yet agonized figure still retained life. But when the cold-blooded murder was perpetrated—when she heard the dull sound of the dagger’s hilt as it struck against that bosom, which she well knew beat for her alone; and when she beheld the warm life-blood of her lover gush forth in torrents from the wound—then, as if recalled to a sense of her own dreadful situation, she uttered a piercing shriek of agony, and, at her utmost speed, fled as if for refuge towards the house.

“Yet, not unpursued—swift as were her footsteps, the sound of those who followed came nearer and more near upon her ear, until she could almost imagine the hot breath of her tormentors fell scorching on her neck; and momentarily she expected the rough grasp of some rude hand forcibly to impede her flight. Neither were her dreaded anticipations far removed from the frightful reality; for in the hurried glance which, in her trepidation, she cast around, the loathed cause of all her miseries rose as an apparition by her side.

Escape appeared next to impossible, and despair had well nigh dashed down every hope, rendering each effort to ensure safety unavailing, when, swift and sudden as a gleam of lightning flashing through the sky, a last though dreaded alternative

darted across her mind. Horrible as was the infliction which her sudden resolution arrived at, not an instant's hesitation or fear checked the resolve; and with almost supernatural strength, lashing off the hold which the King's grasp already laid upon her robe, the beautiful girl, without one compunctious throb, rushed into an adjoining apartment, when, seizing a vessel filled with boiling oil—previously placed there for some domestic purpose—he dashed the scalding fluid over her lovely face and swelling bosom, unmindful of the excruciating agony which necessarily ensued; and as the soft fair skin of her angelic features shrivelled up, blasted under the influence of the seething unguent, she turned her disfigured form towards the King, and madly shrieked with demoniac exultation, on beholding the intense horror with which he gazed on the result of his baffled crime.

“Such,” concluded our ancient narrator, “was the origin of the foundation of this convent; and to the piety of Dona Maria, and her utter disregard of all earthly honours, are we indebted for the shelter and security which we now enjoy, though deprived of the wealth which once we vainly gloried in possessing. *Virgen Maria, por el Espiritu Santo apiadate de nosotros!*” and meekly folding her arms across her breast, without further salutation or notice, the principal of this once-magnificent House turned towards her own oratory, and with slow and feeble steps departed from our sight.

## OPINIONS.

"I must acknowledge," observed the Marquis, when, on the evening of the day on which we visited the convent of Santa Inez, the party were assembled in a spacious balcony overlooking the magnificent Guadalquivir, "I must own the melancholy story we heard this morning has considerably diminished the pleasure I might otherwise have derived from our day's peregrinations. I declare the horror of the old lady's narrative has haunted me ever since."

"I almost wish I had never heard it," said Lady Blanche; "the unhappy termination of the history, together with the meek resignation to her own lot exhibited by the kind conductress, when reciting the events, has greatly detracted from the delight I anticipated when starting on our rambles this forenoon."

"I eschew those sombre histories," remarked Lord Ashdale; "fictitious ones I don't much care about, since, knowing them as merely creations emanating from the fertile brain of the narrator, they amuse for the moment, and are speedily forgotten, without leaving a disagreeable trace behind; but when names, date, and localities, so precisely tally with what approximates as closely to truth as any other history descriptive of deeds performed in bygone days, I cannot divest myself of an inclination to dwell on the subject, marvelling greatly at the wondrous change a few years has effected in our social intercourse one with another, controlling the outward demonstration of the same passions and proneness to evil, which indubitably exists in man's bosom at the present day, as was the case in the reign of Peter the Cruel."

"Why, yes," chimed in Mr. Fitzlay; "I doubt not but we are equally inclined to commit wrong as were our ancestors; but

fortunately we exist in an era, when criminal courts and metropolitan police prove a salutary check on all gentlemen disposed to revive the feudal system in their own private establishments."

"Very true," said Colonel Offersley; "the march of intellect in this the nineteenth century has indeed achieved marvels. In point of fact I recollect a circumstance where the rapidly extending intellectuality of the general community, without a moment's hesitation, transformed a man to a woman, and daily worshipped the image they had set up."

"Make a man a woman, Offersley!" exclaimed Lord Ashdale; "when did that happen?" and as may well be anticipated, the hearers of the gallant Colonel's assertion indulged in somewhat protracted merriment.

"The fact is," said his Excellency, endeavouring to check the outpouring of his mirth, "Offersley is indebted to the ladies in a story, and he is now exciting their curiosity previous to commencing his fairy tale."

"I beg your pardon," seriously replied the other; "what I have advanced I can readily maintain, provided our fair travellers care to listen to the facts. In sooth, the occurrence passed under my own notice, and I again affirm the whole town, ay, a considerable portion of the country likewise, pertinaciously persisted in asserting a man to be a woman!"

"And you were a witness of this unaccountable infatuation?" asked the Marquis.

"I was," replied the Colonel, "and at one period as bigoted in my credulity as the rest."

"How very wonderful!" said Lady Mary, evidently puzzled. "But in what country, Colonel Offersley, did you say this extraordinary hallucination possessed the people?"

"In England, Lady Mary," was the reply, "ay, in London itself."

"In London!" exclaimed all present. "What *can* you allude to, Offersley?—in what part of town was it?"

"The Strand," was the laconic answer.

"This is a perfect enigma to me," said his Excellency, "and in these enlightened days for people to be duped into a belief of such an impossibility as our friend states, truly passes all comprehension."

"And yet," exclaimed the Colonel, smiling, "I think I have seen your Lordship amid the wondering groups, more than once."

"Me!" exclaimed the Peer; "*I* make such a fool of myself as to believe a man to be a woman! preposterous—absurd!"

"Nevertheless, such was the case," answered the asserter of the fact; "I myself beheld you; added to which, I am convinced you would at this moment adhere to your formerly-professed opinion were the delusion repeated. Allow me to enquire, does your Excellency recollect the Swiss Giantess?"

"Well, and what of her?" exclaimed the somewhat irritated Peer. "What has the Swiss Giantess to do in the matter?"

Whether the Marquis imagined his friend Colonel Offersley was demonstrating his capability of exciting ridicule at the expence of his Lordship, or from what other cause his Excellency's choler was aroused, I know not; but assuredly he was fast becoming the reverse of good tempered; neither was his growing displeasure much ameliorated at witnessing the mirth his evident embarrassment portrayed.

Nothing could have been more foreign to Colonel Offersley's intention, than to offer the slightest degree of annoyance to any one, much less to a nobleman whom he so highly respected as the Marquis; but wisely judging that explanations and apologies in the generality of similar misunderstandings frequently tend rather toward increasing than ameliorating the irritability, the Colonel wisely bethought him of commencing his tale: so without further preface, beyond soliciting the ladies' permission, the gallant soldier commenced the narrative of—*The Swiss Giantess*.

# THE SWISS GIANTESS,

A TALE OF 1822.

"In every profession, every individual affects to appear what he would willingly be esteemed, so that we may say, the world is composed of nothing but appearances."

ROCHERPOUCAULT.



## · THE SWISS GIANTESS.

“ONCE upon a time,” as the good old story-books were wont to commence the interesting narrative of “Riequet with the tuft,” and many another piquant marvel, there might have been seen, not many paces from Temple Bar, an enormous piece of painted canvass, nailed over a green baize door, opening on a somewhat insignificant abode, but at which portal, groups were continually issuing to and fro.

On the huge sign already noted the limner had depicted in bright and glowing colours the figure of a lady, with flaxen curls and large red cheeks, who, with a self-satisfied air of conscious superiority, was made to glance with an expression approximating to contempt, on sundry pigmy animals, who, with upturned faces and open mouths, gazed in apparent astonishment at so stupendous a prodigy, the more remarkable to them, as their utmost height did not reach to within several feet of the lady's waist.

The painting was admirably adapted for the purpose intended, viz.—to attract the attention of all passers by, while, to make the representation comprehensible to the meanest capacity, a gentleman in a red frock coat, elaborately bedizened with gold lace, bearing the arms of England on his breast, and wearing blue worsted stockings and low velvet hat, the latter article thickly studded with strips of coloured silk thrust through the

band, kindly volunteered to solve any doubt which the uninitiated might entertain as to the meaning of so strange a specimen of the arts.

With one hand the individual alluded to pointed to a long narrow passage strewn with sawdust, thereby intimating his desire that all passengers in the street should diverge from their course, for the purpose of exploring the ingress which apparently he had no desire to penetrate in person, yet was visibly anxious to force every one he could lay hands on to enter. On his left arm reposed a quantity of bills, from which mass his right hand incessantly extracted them singly, and vigorously did he thrust the said printed documents into the face, hands, and pockets of each and every individual who passed that way. Nor was that all, for exclusive of the attraction of the painting, the gorgeousness of his own apparel, and the unwearied perseverance with which he distributed the papers, elocution was added to the other baits, as with stentorian lungs he never ceased exclaiming, with a voice which far outvied in noise that occasioned by the vehicles and horses passing—"That there, and then only, for the small sum of one shilling, might be seen, *that most marvellous and never-sufficiently-to-be-expatriated-on wonder, the Swiss Giantess, of wide-spread rebound!*" Neither was his vociferation destined to "waste its sweetness on the desert air," for in accordance with the invitation, and evidently much to the satisfaction of the fiery-coloured mortal, group after group thronged to the narrow entrance, leaving the looker-on in astonishment as to where so many persons could by possibility be stowed, when inside the building.

That enigma, however, was eventually and easily explained, to my entire satisfaction, on a personal examination of the premises, there being a separate outlet, by which the visitors departed without ceremony or notice, the sole object of the disclaimer being to entice them *into* the building; for, with a perfect knowledge of human nature, he felt satisfactorily convinced,

that no exertion on his part was in the slightest degree necessary to enforce a retrograde movement.

But this information was only to be acquired by following the example of the many, who daily dived into this dark abyss to gain a glimpse of the majestic damsel ; and as the beautiful features, and most unprecedented length of the lady, afforded topic for conversation to half London, for at least a week, I resolved not to remain the only one in town unable to boast of a personal interview, and, consequently, I determined to satisfy my curiosity forthwith.

It were well to premise, that at the period when the presence of the Swiss Giantess caused so great a commotion in the metropolis, I had but recently been gazetted to a regiment of household cavalry, quartered in London, and consequently, when on duty, it was occasionally my province to visit the hospital, for the purpose of ascertaining whether any of the patients were desirous of preferring requests, unconnected with the medical treatment they were then subjected to.

Having stated thus much as necessary to the development of the narrative, I resume my tale.

Bent on paying a visit to the Giantess, I had nothing to do beyond turning my steps towards Temple Bar, when, placing myself in the current of human beings bent on a similar errand, I was speedily borne to the entrance of the sawdusted passage, readily welcomed by the gentleman in red, and, in a few seconds, found my body pinned in a sort of railed-in box, through which but one individual could manage to pass at a time ; this precaution was judiciously adopted for enabling a very stout lady, wearing a huge turban, and at least ten rings on each finger, to levy the accustomed toll on her visitors ; having complied with which reasonable demand, a wooden bar was raised, which had hitherto impeded progress, and I was left at liberty to proceed onward.

Following the steps of those preceding, I soon arrived at a large room crowded with benches, so distributed as to form

a half-circle in front of a raised platform, somewhat similar to the stage of a theatre.

At the period when I made my appearance, a green curtain, suspended from the ceiling, concealed the rest of the apartment, and as persons yet continued to flock into the room, it was evidently the purpose of the Giantess to wait until she had collected an audience of sufficient numbers, prior to favouring her visitors with a sight of her charms.

There might have been about two hundred people present when the curtain was raised, and the trouble and violent exertions I encountered in effecting an entrance to the building, were rewarded with a view of the lady herself. She was seated on a low stool, by the side of an equally diminutive table, on which one elbow was placed, while her head rested on the open palm of her hand—the attitude was, of course, studied, and certainly with success—but, of a verity, she no more resembled the painting intended to represent her, and which was erected outside the edifice, than she approximated, in form or feature, to the rubicund decoy at the door.

Instead of flaxen hair, long jet-black ringlets fell down her neck and shoulders; her eyebrows were beautifully dark—her eyes of the most perfect blue I ever witnessed—her skin delicately fair; and though little doubt existed in the minds of those present, that art had a considerable share in her “getting up,” nevertheless, it was impossible to deny, that the Swiss Giantess was an extremely handsome person.

At a sign from the woman who attended, for I was informed the Giantess had been dumb from childhood, the object of my curiosity rose from her seat, and as she slowly expanded herself to her full height, I could not help calling to mind the description I had often perused of the *bon constrictor*, unwinding the folds of his body, prior to springing on his prey.

It were impossible to describe the exact nature, or description, of dress worn by the lady; there was an attempt at something

approaching to Swiss costume, yet, in no instance, was any adjunct lost sight of, which, in the slightest degree, could add to her appearance of attitude ; a high cap, similar to those worn in the south of France, surmounted her head ; a long cloak fell in graceful folds from the shoulders to the floor ; and a close observer might have seen, that the heels of the lady's shoes had not been pared even with the sole.

Generally speaking, when nature launches forth in the perpetration of strange freaks, there is some deformity, or visible defect, in the construction of the figure, which instantly arrests the attention, and attracts the sympathy of the beholder ; but in this case, it was essentially different ; there was nothing whatever in the object before me, calculated, in any degree, to excite a feeling of compassion or disgust ; no deformity appeared to exist ; no symptom of annoyance at being there subjected to the gaze of so many, actuated by idle curiosity, seemed to agitate her bosom ; calm and unconcerned, she gazed listlessly round the circle ; and when the exhibition being over, the curtain dropped, no impression remained on my mind, save the certainty of her marriage with some huge grenadier, had she lived during the reign, and dwelt in the dominions, of Frederick the Great of Prussia.

Some time subsequent to my visit thus detailed, I was dining at the mess of the regiment already alluded to, when, in the course of the evening, a discussion as to the beauty of the elongated lady was started.

" I should excessively like to know what has become of the Swiss Giantess," remarked a very young gentleman, whose budding moustache occupied a considerable portion of his attention ; " upon my word, I'm exceedingly anxious to find out."

" If you feel so greatly interested in her welfare," remarked his opposite neighbour, " I'm astonished you don't take the trouble of making inquiry on the subject."

" That is the very thing I *have* done," was the reply.

" And without success ?" inquired the other.

"Exactly so, my dear fellow," responded the first speaker.

"Why, what on earth can it possibly signify to you, Howard, where so awful a monster has fled to?" observed a peculiarly-small officer, from the other side of the table; "for *my* part, I never saw her but once, and, to *my* mind, she far exceeds in monstrosity any ogress presented to the public in a pantomime."

"Nay, nay, Kingscote!" exclaimed several voices at once; "none will deny but the Giantess was extremely handsome."

"Undoubtedly, though somewhat on a large scale," replied the young subaltern, with an imperceptible glance at his diminutive captain.

"Large scale indeed," chimed in his superior, "none will dispute *that*; however, since our friend Howard is so anxious in the matter, I marvel that none of you gentlemen can afford him information on the subject."

"The Swiss Giantess is starring it in the north," said a long thin figure, who hitherto had remained perfectly silent. "I was driving through Temple Bar the other day, on the way to my bankers, when I observed the figure which for so long occupied a prominent feature in that part of the Strand had been removed, and in lieu thereof was posted a placard, to the effect that in consequence of the unprecedented offers which the extreme liberality of a provincial speculator had advanced, the great attraction of the season had for a while withdrawn from the scene of her unquestionable success; therefore do I opine," quoth the narrator, "that the object of Howard's attachment is figuring at York, or——"

"What is equally likely," interrupted the Captain, "*getting up stairs* at Brixton, as an impostor."

This sally of the senior officer caused a general smile; and some other topic being started, the recollection of the Swiss Giantess held not remembrance in the minds of any of the party, if we except, as doubtful, the ardent imagination of her champion, Mr. Howard.

The following morning it so chanced I was orderly officer

in the barracks, an employment which, as I have previously stated, devolved on whoever chanced to be on duty, the necessity of visiting the sick in hospital.

"One of the men who was brought here three days ago is extremely anxious to see you, sir," remarked the hospital Serjeant, saluting me as I entered the building, "and I was about to take the liberty of sending," he added, "when you crossed the barrack-yard, sir."

"You would have done perfectly right," was my answer; "but is the patient so very desirous to see *me*?"

"Very much so, sir," replied the steady old soldier; "but particularly since yesterday, after the amputation."

"Amputation!" I repeated with a shudder; "poor fellow! how did the accident happen?"

"His horse fell in a charge last field day," replied my informant, "and the bone was shattered in so dreadful a manner, that the only chance the surgeons had of saving his life, was by having recourse to the knife; but notwithstanding all that could be done, I much fear he is drooping fast."

"Poor fellow!" I again repeated, as, following my conductor, I entered the ward where the sufferer lay.

Those who know anything of the army, are aware of the excessive cleanliness and quiet pervading a military hospital; but it is not my purpose to dwell on that subject in this presence.

The ward I entered was a small room, adapted for six beds, two were at the time unoccupied, while on that at the furthest end of the apartment, lay the patient who had so anxiously inquired for me.

He was an extremely handsome boy, of not more than eighteen or nineteen years of age; his hair was unusually light, and as fine and glossy as a woman's; his face was pale as the purest marble, while on his smooth forehead stood forth large beads of cold perspiration—the effect of pain, and oftentimes the forerunner of death.

"I would not have given you this trouble, sir," commenced the young soldier, on my seating myself on the spare bed beside him, "had I not been most anxious for your assistance."

"Let not that for a moment disturb you, my lad," was my instant rejoinder; "it is but my duty to ascertain whether the patients require anything beyond the surgeon's assistance, and if I can prove instrumental in meeting your wishes, you may depend upon my willing exertions."

While thus speaking, the handsome boy gazed earnestly in my face, as though eagerly catching every sentence as it fell from my lips.

"He has been in the regiment but a very short time," observed the corporal, in a low tone, "but he gave every promise, sir, of some day becoming a splendid soldier. His father," added my informant, in reply to my questions, "his father, sir, brought him up from Yorkshire but a year since, saying, that two of his sons had served King George, in His Majesty's household cavalry, and the third should follow in his brothers' steps."

For my own part, I had so very lately joined the regiment, that nearly every one of the men was a stranger to me; nor could I call to mind having ever beheld the sufferer until the time now referred to. Not so, however, with the old hospital corporal. Bred, and, for aught I know to the contrary, born in the regiment, he could recount the history of every non-commissioned officer and private borne on its muster-roll, and, vain of his knowledge, a display of garrulity might confidently be relied on, if opportunity was afforded him for its display.

On this occasion, however, I was far too much interested in the young soldier patiently to listen to the tedious information of the elder one, so motioning him to cease talking, I took occasion to express my sincere hope for the speedy recovery of the sufferer.

"I do not expect it, sir," was the firm, yet mournful reply. "I know it is in vain to cherish such a feeling; but it will be a

consolation to my old father to hear that, although his son did not fall like his elder brother, on the field, still that he was buried by *that* brother's comrades, and will sleep in no dishonoured grave."

How strange, thought I, that the members of a farmer's family, though possibly in affluent circumstances, yet living so far away from all that could allure the eye, or dazzle the senses, with even a remnant of the bright days of chivalry, should nurture in their breasts such gallant sentiments of honour, as would have done credit to Bayard himself.

The old father, of whom the poor boy spoke, I remember once to have seen—he came from his distant home, to visit the grave of his youngest son; the eldest fell at Waterloo, and his second was still in the regiment at the time I write of.

The officers were standing in the barrack-yard in small groups, a parade having just been dismissed, when an old man, with long and silvery white hair, falling down in smoothly-brushed tresses on each side of a remarkably striking countenance, entered the barrack-yard. He was well, though plainly dressed, and his whole demeanour bespoke the honest, true, and loyal English farmer of the olden day; his form bent with age; but although he carried a walking-stick in his hand, it appeared more as a customary appendage when he went abroad, than as a necessary support for his steps. One glance at the officers was sufficient for his purpose, for walking straight up to the gallant Colonel, while with one hand he raised his hat from his finely-formed head, he stretched forth the other, in greeting, towards the Commander; neither was the proffered salutation rejected; for although prouder blood flowed not in any veins than in those of the officer thus addressed, none could have construed the act otherwise than it was intended to be viewed—as a mute acknowledgment of the gallant chief's kindness towards his three sons, whom, with a chivalric feeling of loyalty, the old man had enrolled among the ranks of the body-guard of his Sovereign.

"I have something to communicate, sir," said the young

life-guardsmen, on seeing me prepare to quit the ward; "I will not detain you long, sir, but I have a favour to request which, I trust, you will grant."

Of course, I readily assented; and resuming my seat, the dying man continued—"You will find here, sir," he added, drawing a small pocket-book from underneath his pillow, and placing it in my hands, "you will find within these leaves, sir, four notes, each of one hundred pounds value; nay, sir," he exclaimed, observing the expression of surprise, which I could not avoid betraying, "do not be alarmed, sir; they were honestly, though perhaps foolishly earned; however, there is the money. I engaged myself in a silly enterprise, and here behold the profits. What I have to request, at your hands, sir, is, that you will cause this money to be given to my only sister, as the last offering of affection she can ever receive from me;" and as he uttered the last words in a low and trembling tone, the hot big tears rolled rapidly down his sunken cheeks.

Unwilling to agitate him with further questions, I remained silent, until, forcibly suppressing his emotions, he raised his eyes to my countenance, and added—

"What I say, sir, is, on my honour, true: the money is my own, although gained, in what by some may be termed, not strictly a justifiable way. I do not think, however, I should be exempt from blame in revealing the source whence it sprung, under other circumstances than the present, since the discovery may affect others when I am gone. However, sir, to remove any scruple you may have, and in the firm reliance that you will not divulge my secret, until its being made public can no longer injure, or advantage any one, the money which you now hold in your hand," and here a faint smile, for a moment, lit up the fast-changing countenance of the young soldier, "those notes, which the pocket-book contains, became my portion of the profits, amassed by my personating

THE SWISS GIANTESS IN THE STRAND."

Months rolled rapidly away. The grass was already springing up on the grave of the dead man; his place in the ranks, amid his gallant comrades, had long ere then been filled; his sorrowing parent had returned to his distant home, and the untimely fate of the handsome life-guardsmen was erased from most men's memory, by incidents of more recent date.

Business, on a brilliant day in June, called me to the city, and as I passed by the spot, where I first beheld the gaudy painting flaunting in the breeze, the remembrance of the deceased soldier's story flashed across my memory, and involuntarily I turned my eyes towards the wall, where the figure had been exhibited in all the preposterous absurdity of comparison that the canvass would admit; but how shall I describe my surprise, as the very picture, which I had originally seen, was there again displayed in all its tawdry tinsel of attraction; the same man in red was in the act of uttering the very expressions I had so often heard; groups of persons, as before, besieged the door; the narrow passage, strewn with saw-dust, was open to receive the visitors, and all gave token that the "Swiss Giantess" was as flourishing as ever.

Can I have been deceived, thought I, as I gazed on these various proofs of the lady's existence. Is it possible, that to gain my assistance in forwarding the hundred pound notes, as the dying soldier requested, he fabricated the story of having personated the Swiss Giantess, merely to conceal the actual means, whereby so large a sum was obtained, and that too when on the brink of the grave?

The thought was too painful to dwell on; so, paying my shilling, I entered the room as the curtain was in the very act of being raised. The figure, in exactly the attitude I had seen it, appeared precisely the same as my old acquaintance—in no instance was the dress altered; the long dark ringlets shone as black and glossy as ever, and I was turning away in disgust, believing myself to have been deeply imposed upon,

when the object raised its lofty form from the seat, and, bending its head in the direction where I stood, to my inexpressible relief, I encountered the gaze of two piercingly dark eyes, as unlike the once-beautiful blue of the dead man's orbs, as one thing could possibly contrast with another.

“ And this then,” thought I, on leaving the exhibition, “ this then is but one of the thousand frauds daily practised in an overgrown city, whereby wealth is amassed, and the idle curiosity of fools gratified ;” and feeling considerably relieved, when delivered of my sage reflection, I went on my way, pondering on the follies of mankind, forgetting, at the moment, that I had been as much duped, on first visiting the show, as were any of the gaping throng at that instant staring at the counterfeit giantess.

## TO THE READER.

I have already informed my readers, that it is not my intention to convert these pages into a guide book, whereby future travellers may care to learn the height and breadth of every steeple and aqueduct we chanced to encounter during our travels, together with the names and pedigrees of the various founders of the different cities ; neither can I spare leisure for specifying the correct dates at which those ancient architects commenced their labours.

Such information can readily be obtained from manifold volumes now in print, and may be had of any bookseller *in* the United Kingdom, and I dare say out of it also. Such multitudes of curious English and Americans have wandered over Seville, Malaga, Grenada, and numerous other Spanish localities, during the last few years, than no occasion whatever can exist for worrying my readers by a lengthened repetition of what they are already conversant with.

On this account I eschew all romantic similes touching the unequalled loveliness of the Guadalquivir ; neither will I dilate on the beauty of the fine collection of pictures by Murillo, nor yet launch forth into enthusiasm amid elaborate descriptions of the ancient palace of the long-since-departed Moorish Kings.

The Hall of the Ambassadors must be passed by without any justly-merited panegyric being inscribed on these leaves ; and should my accompanying friends be resolved on exploring the excavations now in progress at Seville, I must trust to their gentle courtesy in allowing me the privilege of declining their society on that particular occasion.

It may, nevertheless, be very justly surmised, that, although the various wonders well worthy attention are not here

fully set forth and expatiated on, the ladies of our party, and indeed the gentlemen likewise, permitted no opportunity for sight-seeing to escape their perseverance in that laudable occupation; and, strange to say, the enthusiasm displayed by my fair country-women in pursuit of amusement when on the banks of the Guadalquivir, was as fully manifested as had been their utter indifference for prosecuting similar researches at Cadiz: why it was so, might be difficult to determine, though my friends would readily have accounted for their apparent inconsistency on the old plea of paucity of *time*; yet how it came to pass that so little of that commodity was at their disposal at Cadiz, while abundance was lavished at Seville, I cannot explain. Neither indeed did it in the slightest degree interfere with myself. I was perfectly contented in the society which I so fortunately enjoyed, and consequently little heeded whether I traversed the ocean in Lord Ashdale's capacious and well-appointed schooner, or was occupied in an equally-agreeable engagement, by escorting the ladies through the different cities in search of marvels and antique curiosities.

And many strange sights we beheld, and many a delightful stroll we ventured on, where, peradventure, few English travellers cared to explore; but at length His Excellency thought fit to abbreviate our pastime, by alleging the unfailing resource which, on all occasions, was adduced as a paramount reason for moving whenever we became comfortably settled.

"Time," observed the Marquis, "waits for no one," which trite and novel assurance being incontrovertible, the light baggage was collected, together with the numerous heavy additions consequent on the ladies' purchases, the steamer was again had recourse to, and in a few hours we regained the yacht, weighed anchor, and the schooner stood out to sea, with a fair breeze for Malaga.

Here again, as at Cadiz and Seville, we were greatly indebted to Her Britannic Majesty's Consul for the celerity with which all our wishes were complied with, as likewise for the speedy appear-

ance of innumerable comforts which English ladies are accustomed to expect, but which Spaniards never experience—a knowledge of their existence being unknown.

Gladly did Lord Ashdale seize the opportunity now offered for visiting the Cathedral, and testing the excellence of the harmonic sounds extractable from the organ therein contained ; but as his Lordship proceeded on that expedition alone, and moreover said very little on the subject when he returned, I greatly suspect that disappointment preponderated above pleasurable surprise, which latter satisfaction he undoubtedly anticipated as the result of his visit.

But although our travelling companion forbore explanation and eulogium on what he heard and beheld inside the building, we, who cared not to follow his example by so close a scrutiny, were content at gazing on the outside, which certes is most unsightly to behold, since of two towers originally intended to be erected as part of the edifice, one only is completed, the other patiently waiting for a like consummation, for perfecting which the import duties charged on vessels arriving in the magnificent harbour are by law dedicated ; but as very little *law*, saving that which the Governor for the time being may declare to be such, is promulgated, or if attempted, speedily checked, the revenues arising from the profitable source alluded to, find their way to the pockets of the commandant, instead of being appropriated towards the completion of the ancient edifice.

And who can blame the chief officer in repaying himself, since, if he omits so doing, from no other source will, or does he look for remuneration—most assuredly not to his own government ; and consequently his attention is naturally turned to the capabilities afforded him for reimbursement of his expenses from the district or city over which he presides.

The same at Algeciras, where the commandant enjoys a nominal salary of about £2000 per annum, supposed—by a pleasing sophism, emanating from his rulers—to be paid by the Crown ; but as long experience has clearly proved the inadequacy

of placing too much reliance on such doubtless *well-meant* intentions, the officer in power consoles himself for his *not* unexpected loss, by making a much better thing of his temporary power, in levying contributions on every species of provision which crosses the Spanish frontier *en route* to the garrison of Gibraltar.

But with these matters we had nothing to do : the ladies were pleased to say the cathedral assumed a far more picturesque appearance in its unfinished state, than possibly would have been the case had it been completed ; consequently nothing further could be adduced on that head.

Colonel Offersley, in accordance with his romantic disposition, insisted on the whole party proceeding in quest of the identical passage where Mr. Fitzlay had previously assured us his friend, or relation—for I declare I know not which he was—passed so many uncomfortable hours, and that too with a huge cork in his mouth, considerable larger than was the aperture into which it was thrust ; but willingly as we aided in the search, all our endeavours to find the locality were in vain.

Our friend the Consul corroborated the tale in each particular, as recounted by the “ Man of many tongues ;” yet was he wholly at a loss to point out the spot where the outrage had happened.

“ The affair took place,” he observed, “ prior to his appointment at Malaga ; and though he had repeatedly heard the narrative detailed by officers and merchants arriving from Gibraltar, yet he felt bound to acknowledge he never had experienced sufficient curiosity as to induce him to search for the passage where the ruffianly attack was perpetrated.”

Foiled in our object, the next question propounded was, in what way should the two hours of the day yet remaining at our disposal be passed : this difficulty, as it happened, was speedily set at rest by Lady Blanche declaring she was positively tired, and begging hard for permission to rest from further peregrinations until the ensuing morning. So moderate a request could not be met with aught save acquiescence ; and to say the truth,

I confidently believe there were others who felt in no degree averse to the proposed relaxation from their labours.

The fair travellers accordingly withdrew their coveted society from the rest of the party, leaving us to while away our time as best we could, deprived of that unequalled gratification, which the conversation of intelligent and beautiful women cannot fail to bestow whenever they deign to exert their influence; but as much was to be done in the way of preparation for our journey towards Grenada, which was destined to commence on the following morning, the coterie broke up at an early hour, when each individual gladly sought repose.

Bright shone the sun through our open casements the next day, when rising from our not particularly comfortable tressels, each arrayed himself in whatever costume he deemed most appropriate for the occasion, and when assembled at breakfast, the party approached much nearer in appearance to well-dressed characters engaged in the performance of a melodrama, than to anything else my imagination can assimilate them to.

But that was nothing compared to the exhibition outside the posada; I really doubt if the Queen of Spain, in person, had paid the town of fruit and lavender a visit—which, by the way, was excessively unlikely—a greater crowd could have congregated, than was the case with the good people who came to stare at the “Mad English.”

The baggage, or as His Excellency termed it, the “light necessaries,” had joined us from Gibraltar, and amid a host of valets, footmen, and a multitude of other animals, chiefly English, and consequently useless, the Marquis’s French cook was discernible, seated on the roof of a marvellously-appointed vehicle, which to our after solace, proved to contain the *cuisine* so admirably presided over by the artiste then perched above it. Two *soubrettes*—*anglises*—ladies’ maids—and very pretty ones too, made their appearance, and in due time, each person being told off to his particular post, the word was given, and away we started, more like a caravan bound for Mecca,

than a jovial party of foreign travellers prosecuting a party of pleasure.

But to describe our progress. A few lancers composed the advanced guard, followed by the guide, arrayed in his *xamarra* jacket, high-crowned *sombrero*, and clad in the picturesque costume peculiar to Andalusia. Next in rotation appeared the baggage, piled in dense masses into covered carts, of truly antediluvian construction, each drawn by five strong mules, having, exclusive of the grotesque trappings, a bell suspended round each throat. In charge of this very important part of the procession, rode two more lancers, together with an ample complement of boys and drivers; and the reins, traces, and, in fact, the whole of the useful part of the harness, was made of cord. Immediately in rear of these cumbrous machines, came a chariot, or rather juvenile omnibus, of a construction defying all attempts at description. This carriage likewise was drawn by five mules, caparisoned and adorned with tinkling music, similar to those of the preceding vehicles, and to these animals was entrusted the charge of the ladies' maids, two valets, and, though last in enumeration, by no means the most insignificant personage of the whole, the accomplished French cook; then came a large heavy coach, painted with dingy yellow, and garnished with red wheels; six mules were affixed thereto; and in this conveyance, the ladies themselves, replete with good humour and bright smiles, took up their abode. Delighted with the novelty which on every side met their observation, and resolved to be pleased with all they encountered, the fairer part of the travellers formed, not only the most ornamental, but by far the most agreeable portion of our community. The rear of the column was brought up by a corporal and two more lancers; but, exclusive of the persons already enumerated, the gentlemen rode on horseback, while nearly as many servants, and, moreover, two extra mules, for conveying lighter portions of the baggage, were driven in front. Altogether, including the whole party, servants, escort, drivers, and muloteers, we amounted to

thirty-four persons—a tolerable force wherewith to commence the campaign.

All progressed according to our most sanguine wishes, until, having advanced about two leagues on our way, the rain, as if to convince us that occasionally it *could* rain in Spain, descended upon our heads in torrents. Those only who have experienced a deluge, amid Spanish mountains, can form an adequate idea of the facility with which our hilarity was converted into wailing. Wet to the innermost recesses of our garments—chilled with the intensely cold wind, which in fitful gusts came rushing down each gorge and stoney valley, we had nothing but patience to resort to. Several leagues yet lay before us, and anticipating probable loss if, separated from the baggage, added moreover, to the bad and broken state of the roads, our rate of progress did not exceed three miles an hour.

But in a very insecure measure protected from the rain, the situation of the ladies was far from exhilarating; the country was known to be infested with robbers, and, although the equestrians were armed to the teeth, I doubt if one of the fire-arms belonging to the party would have performed its duty. The shadows of evening were fast closing around; and the long-protracted sojourn in the rough vehicle, occasioned our fair companions a natural anxiety for a speedy termination to the day's journey; yet the slow rate at which we moved, and the difficulty experienced in forcing the baggage over the deep holes and awful ruts we encountered, made the hour of our desired arrival problematical indeed.

To repine, however, would have proved worse than useless, and so the gentle sufferers wisely opined; and where ninety-nine women in one hundred would have deplored their misfortunes without effecting anything, save an addition to their troubles, our party determined to view everything in the best light; and though to the uninitiated it might appear somewhat difficult to extract amusement, from a probability of being benighted amid unknown mountains, and in a heavy storm, with the agreeable

concomitants of cold, hunger, and fatigue, the fair occupiers of the coach proved, by their good-humoured merriment, that unavoidable *disagréments* possessed not the power to ruffle either the smooth brows or placid tempers of the adventurous travellers.

Thus sped we on, the wind rising, the rain falling ; while the animals, yoked to the vehicle, floundering from side to side of the uneven, muddy road, gave visible tokens of disinclination to face the increasing storm. What occasioned most uneasiness was the rapidly-approaching darkness, for being unprovided with either lamps or torches, one false step, or a trifling mistake on the part of the drivers, might in an instant have precipitated the vehicles down some awfully-yawning gulf, which, without bank or railing for our protection, was perfectly ready to receive us.

We were now about six miles from El Colminar, a small hamlet, infested by a numerous horde of *ladrones*, and situated among lofty mountains. distantly removed from any dwellings, excepting those appertaining to their own agreeable fraternity. For the ladies to pass the night at so miserable a village was declared wholly impracticable ; and as a *centa* two leagues in advance, had originally been fixed on as our halting-place, it was gallantly determined to push forward. On starting, we had hoped to reach our destination long ere dark ; but not having taken into consideration the probability of the storm, together with its concomitant results, we were wofully deceived in our calculations ; and as the people of the inn were totally unconscious of the honour we purposed to bestow, it was deemed advisable to send some one in advance, to announce the approach of the main body.

To effect this object, I was requested to ride on, receiving at the same time positive instructions to have fires lighted in all the rooms, abundance of hot water, together with the necessary appurtenances to a lady's toilette. Had I informed the fair beings that such a thing as a fireplace was rarely to be encoun-

tered throughout Spain, and, as regarded rooms, nothing beyond four white-washed walls must be expected, I felt doubtful what credit might have been vouchsafed me for veracity ; so, leaving discovery to be effected through disclosure, I deemed it considerably wiser to hold my peace, and accordingly wended in silence on my way.

Lord Ashdale, a guide, and myself, proceeded on this duty ; and cold and drenched with rain as we were, the increase of pace, from a slow walk to a brisk trot, was of no trifling advantage in furthering the circulation of our blood. Instead of decreasing, the storm appeared to gather fresh vigour each moment ; and from small mountain rills, which in the morning trickled down the sides of the lofty sierras, now gushed forth magnificent cascades in uncontrolled force, scattering the spray, as they gained the rocks below, in every direction.

At length El Colminar appeared in sight, and the account which our guide had already given of the place, was fully borne out, when beheld. Our road skirted the hamlet ; and at the entrance of this street of huts stood a miserable cottage, having two clumsy waggons drawn up at the door, and *that* dwelling, we were told, was the inn.

Little inclined to halt at so unprepossessing a house of entertainment, we put spurs to our steeds, and after one of the most uncomfortable rides I remember to have engaged in, the white-washed gable end of a long building loomed indistinctly through the mist. Here, then, was our place of refuge ; and meager as appeared the outward sign of whatever comfort might internally be afforded, we soon made our arrival known by an unceremonious application, through the instrumentality of the butt-end of our pistols, against the barred and solid door.

Not a vestige of light within the building was visible ; but as any shelter was preferable to exposure on such a night among the mountains, we resolved to put up with whatever accommodation we could find, rather than journey onward, in the faint prospect of reaching the next inn.

After questions innumerable, uttered in a shrill tone of voice, we were eventually permitted to enter; and although security from the storm was a very considerable improvement in our case, there appeared little prospect of much accommodation beyond. Immediately on passing the gates, we entered a large court-yard, surrounded by buildings and outhouses of various descriptions, and on turning short to the right, we rode into an apartment, which served for the purposes of kitchen, scullery, dining-room, and stable. This part of the dwelling was paved with rough sharp stones, while the rafters overhead, black, and begrimed with smoke, furnished a receptacle for the undisturbed dirt and cobwebs of many a previous year. At the extreme end of the room, a few brass and copper utensils were suspended from nails driven into the wall, immediately under which, and crouching round some pieces of half-ignited wood, skulked four as villanous looking ruffians as the pencil of an artist might wish to portray: three women were added to the group, but little did they contribute, in their own persons, to the well-attested beauty of their dark-eyed countrywomen, though, if a sombre hue be accounted a charm, they certainly possessed the various shades in perfection, but for which adventitious aids, they were indebted rather to the daily occupations wherein they toiled, than to any captivating tints bestowed by nature.

However unprepossessing in outward appearance these damsels might have been, they evinced much willingness to aid us when acquainted with our wishes. More fuel was readily heaped on the fire, charcoal in the stoves was ignited, and two inquisitive hens, who for some time had been gazing with astonishment at such unusual evidences of activity, were caused to descend from their exalted stations, and, in a few seconds, formed no contemptible portion of the evening's arrangements. All that by ingenuity could be effected to produce an appearance of comfort, was attempted; and, though when finished, the *tout ensemble* of the apartments presented but slight traces

of luxury and refinement, it was out of our power to accomplish more. Two *braseros* afforded the only means of communicating warmth to the bed-rooms of the *Venta de los Domajos*, and the smoke of the green wood fire below was so extremely dense and painful to the eyes, as to render it impossible for a person unaccustomed to its smarting influence, to partake its warmth.

In the mean time our guide unsaddled and fed the horses, and we were revolving in our minds what substitute we could adopt as raiment while our saturated garments were being dried, when, between the low moaning of the wind, as it swept round the building, we distinctly heard the sound of horses' feet.

An hour only had elapsed since our arrival ; it was therefore impossible we could so soon anticipate the approach of our friends ; but the new comers, in reply to our challenge, having shouted "*lanceros*," we undid the portal, and two of our escort rode into the court.

From them we gathered, that having passed the village El Colminar, the baggage had stuck fast in the deep ruts, the mules became jaded and knocked up, the drivers weary and discontented, and, finally, so many objections were raised against proceeding, that the cavalcade was unavoidably compelled to retrace its way to the identical hamlet which had been denounced as unfit for any lady to place her foot in, the appearance of which, I must acknowledge, afforded but little indeed to recommend in its favour.

Our reinforcement accounted for their presence at the *venta* by saying, our friends at the village, finding it impracticable to join us that night, and hearing but an indifferent description of the *honesty* of the lodging where we were housed, had, with much consideration, despatched the lancers, with orders to remain with us during the night. Neither were we sorry for this addition of strength, since, to the four gentlemen of ferocious aspect already recorded, two more—from whence I know not—had silently joined their comrades, and were seated round

the fire, smoking, listening, and scowling on us, when the soldiers arrived.

Entering the kitchen, the lancers cast a furtive glance around, and having fixed their gaze on the before-named group of worthies, the close scrutiny appeared to afford the latter other than pleasurable sensations. Their intercourse, however, was not long confined to looks only, for, drawing one of the ruffians aside, the new comers spoke some words to him in a low tone of voice, to which the peasant evidently, and moreover in no very com- plaisant humour, demurred. To this the men in authority paid little or no attention, for, after a few striking arguments, which produced a visible effect, the charcoal burners, or whatever they might have been, quitted the fire, and, in a few seconds, we heard them driving their mules through the gateway, in search of some place of shelter where their fellow-travellers might feel less averse to their society.

“Good riddance of those fellows, Senors,” exclaimed one of the lancers, stirring up a huge mess of *Buccalláo*, which was simmering on the fire: “their absence is better than their company, at all times.”

“Their appearance certainly did not tend to their advantage,” observed Lord Ashdale; “and yet this is a horrid night to turn even a dog out.”

“True, Senor, most true,” responded the soldier: “but which, I pray you, is most advisable—either that those fellows should sleep one night in the rain; or that you should sleep for ever with ——?” and drawing his forefinger across his throat, the pantomime was as legible as words.

“Indeed!” exclaimed I; “and would those fellows actually have attempted murder?”

“They’re far from being particular,” dryly chimed in the other soldier, who, in the most unceremonious manner, had divested himself of the principal portion of his wet garments, and was then tending the progress of the supper, in costume

approaching to *puris naturalibus*. "Anything suits them, Senors, provided the smallest plunder can be gained."

"But you appeared to know them," said I, addressing the lancer who first called the bandit from the group. "Possibly you may have met them before."

"One of them I am well acquainted with, Caballéro," was his answer. "He was a great friend of El Colorádo; but now that his companion is disposed of, this fellow has sunk into insignificance;" and here the two soldiers exchanged looks of intelligence, evidently having reference to some exploit or adventure, the recollection of which appeared to afford them most unequivocal satisfaction.

"Who was the person you call El Colorádo?" I asked, my curiosity somewhat excited; "who was the friend of the muleteer just departed?"

"A noted robber, Senor; one who for years had been the terror of all persons inhabiting the country, from Malaga to within a short distance of Alhama," replied my informer.

"And is he dead, did you say?" interrogated his Lordship.

"Why, yes, Senor," replied the lancer, with a self-satisfied air; "dead to all the world, now; but as you appear interested about him, possibly you may like to have an account of the mode in which he expired."

"I should like it extremely," was my answer; and my noble companion concurring in opinion, our military ally expressed his willingness to satisfy our curiosity.

To this offer we willingly assented; and having despatched our frugal repast, aided and abetted by our guide and escort, and wrapping ourselves up in warm blankets, we forthwith caused the wine flasks to be replenished, and composed ourselves to pay due attention to whatever our escort might relate. I think it right, however, to premise, that the reader must not consider me as advocating the cause, or defending the conduct, of either of the parties. I merely repeat the tale as I gathered

it from the lancer; and those who peruse the narrative will best judge what degree of blame or otherwise should be attached to him who carried into execution the orders he received.

From inquiries I afterwards made, I found the story was essentially correct; and as a specimen of a Spanish woman's fidelity, and man's heartless treachery, I think it can find few equals.

To repeat the account in the very terms in which I first heard it, would be tedious for perusal; I have therefore collected together all the leading features of the case, as detailed by the lancer at the *Venta de los Domajos*; and the following is the substance of his communication.

# EL COLORADO.

Oh, woman ! in our hours of ease,  
Uncertain, coy, and hard to please.

\* \* \* \*

When pain and anguish wring the brow,  
A ministering angel thou. *Marmion.*



## EL COLORÁDO.

BERNARDO OLENTE, or El Colorádo, by which latter appellation he was afterwards better known, first saw the light at the small village of Olias, near the sea coast, on the southern boundary of Spain, and following the example of his forefathers, was in course of time, enrolled among those of his more adventurous countrymen, who, as occasion offered, adopted the trade of fisherman or smuggler, as at the moment seemed most likely to tend to advantage.

At the period when the young Bernardo was first initiated into the mysteries of a *contrabandista's* life, the *Carabineros* and *Guardá Costas* had not reached by many degrees the still yet middling activity, to which at the present day they aspire ; and for a cargo of illicit goods to have fallen into the hands of the revenue in by-gone times, was an affair of but very rare occurrence indeed, and one which might easily have been traced to a supineness, or negligence, on the part of the smugglers, in not having previously made their arrangements with the men in power.

Subsequent events have proved, that although often successful in their speculations, it requires more knowledge and daring to run a cargo now, than was requisite for the safe delivery of a dozen some fifteen years since ; and differing from his prototype of old, the *contrabandista* of this generation is too frequently a

reckless daring ruffian, uniting in his own person the marauder and robber, and, if occasion or his own safety require it, an unhesitating proneness to shed blood. Yet such was not the case when El Colorado first launched his boat for other purposes than waging war against the finny tribe ; and indeed the measure was seldom resorted to, save when a particular sum of money was called for on some gala occasion, or when the *novio*, smitten by the bright eyes of his mistress, ventured on a trip to Gibraltar, to procure some showy article of dress to lay at the feet of his beloved. The notion that in so acting, he was guilty of crime, or chargeable with moral turpitude, never entered his imagination ; and provided he could raise his constitutional indolence to undertake the voyage, little did he trouble his mind as to the justice, or otherwise, of defrauding the revenue of his country.

In this way things progressed with Bernardo, sometimes adhering to his ostensible occupation at home, and at others, engaged with his companions on the more arduous and lucrative employment. But a cloud was fast gathering over the head of the smuggler, which was eventually destined to descend with fearful consequences on its victim, and, by driving him from his home, step by step force him to the brink of that precipice, from which, notwithstanding his manifold escapes, he was ultimately fated to descend.

Ten years have scarcely elapsed, since the circumstance occurred that drove Bernardo Olente forth, a proscribed man—outlawed, hunted, and a bandit : and but very few months have passed away since his crimes and misfortunes found a termination in a violent death.

For a long time past, the executive government, such as it was, felt the necessity—without considering whether they possessed the means—of adopting measures for the prevention of smuggling with more energy than had hitherto attended their efforts ; and although the now daily importations into Spain, without paying duty, plainly evince the inutility of the attempt

—still, though they were unable finally to crush the system, they contrived to check it for the time being.

Among the peasantry in the vicinity of Olias, none were more remarkable than Bernardo for the frank good humour of his address, together with the handsome and comely appearance of his person. Possessed of all which an abstemious Spaniard could require, his occasional contraband trips had rendered him affluent beyond his wants; and with youth, high spirits, and a light heart, many might have envied the condition of the humble fisherman.

It may not be supposed that these qualifications, combined in one and the same person, were altogether unheeded by the fair sex, for many were the sad hearts and disappointed maidens, when the coveted prize announced to the small community with whom he dwelt, that his unalterable affections had long since been bestowed on the daughter of a near neighbour, the pretty, though extremely young Pepita Garcia.

The time, the arrangements, and all connected with the intended ceremony were soon decided on for their wedding, and but a few days were yet to intervene, when, in a luckless moment, it was proposed to lighten the tedious slowness of the hours, by the excitement of a smuggling excursion. Nothing could have been more suited to the wishes of the intended bridegroom; the more so, as it would enable him to purchase some further presents, whereby to increase the rustic splendour of his bridal.

Accustomed from her infancy to watch the departing boats as their sails wafted them from the strand, and unconscious of the dangers attending the expedition, Pepita saw, in the divulged intention of her lover, nothing beyond a wish to add to her gratification, and a natural desire to accompany those friends in their undertaking, who were ever ready to aid his plans when required. Sorrowing only at the unavoidable though short absence which must separate them, the young girl placed a small crucifix over her lover's neck, and throwing herself

within his arms for a last embrace, speedily dried her tears, and having with cheerfulness resumed her daily avocations, she patiently awaited the day on which it was calculated Bernardo might be expected to return.

A week had thus flown by, and on the following morning the anxious girl fondly anticipated the appearance of the old lateen craft would meet her restless gaze: yet the day sped without her being able to discover a speck in the distant horizon—no sign was there of Bernardo, and late at night, dispirited and sad, she sought her humble pallet.

Wearied with conjectures as to the non-appearance of her betrothed, and conjuring up, as true affection ever will, numberless incredible and almost impossible evils, as the cause of his delay, the fair peasant at length laid her throbbing head upon her pillow, and, ere long, sunk into profound slumber. Suddenly she started from her sleep, and resting on her arm, listened with an intensity of eagerness. Could she have been mistaken? Was it but the phantom of a dream that disturbed her? Hush! again—another shot—another, and then several in quick succession, as though some stronger party were engaged with a more feeble adversary, who, by the few and dropping discharges from their muskets, were, apparently, in retreat. What could it mean? Never had the sound of deadly strife fallen on her ear before; and scarcely knowing how to act, in fear and trembling she cast on her apparel, and instantly sought her father's room. The chamber, however, was unoccupied, and none but women were in the building, who were, therefore, reluctantly compelled to await the return of the male part of the family, in tribulation and suspense.

At length morning dawned, and the bright sun, slowly emerging as it were from the blue pellucid waves of the Mediterranean, seemed as though sent to gladden with his glorious rays the hearts of all those dwellers upon earth over whom he shed his dazzling light. But with the return of day came to Olias the appalling news, that the felucca which had been so

anxiously expected, with its adventurous crew, had been attacked and captured, at the very instant when, near the threshold of their homes, the smugglers were rejoicing in their safety. Neither was this all. Blood had been spilt—murder had been committed. Of the crew it was reported two had fallen: the others were either captured or dispersed.

To a mind uneducated and tinged with narrow prejudices, as was that of poor Pepita, any attempt to justify the conduct of the aggressors would have been vain; for, instead of attaching blame to the friends and relations of her youth, who had so frequently, and in uninterrupted safety, engaged in what to her appeared justifiable traffic, she regarded the servants of the Government as a band of rapacious robbers, wresting from the labourer his hard-earned pittance, and who, in fact, rejoiced in the act of reaping where they did not sow.

But where was Bernardo? was he among the slain, the captured, or was he a houseless wanderer, seeking safety in the recesses of the mountains, unknowing where to lay his head? This was a problem which none in the village could solve. Attracted by the shots, the inhabitants on the previous night had rushed forth from their dwellings, in hopes of being able to afford succour to their friends; but their aid arrived not in time: already was the enemy in too strong force to offer the slightest prospect of success crowning an attempt at rescue; and, as the killed, together with the prisoners, had been removed, none could give a satisfactory detail of the affray.

About noon, a considerable party of military entered the village, and having first searched each house and hovel in the hamlet, finally posted up a placard, offering a reward for the apprehension of the smugglers concerned in the last night's transaction, and two hundred dollars for the safe custody of Bernardo Olente, commonly called El Colorado—on account of his auburn hair—charged with murder.

Thus, then, was a final termination put to the fond hopes of future happiness, in which the young, and now truly unfor-

fortunate couple had indulged. The joyous dreams of anticipated bliss were at once dashed to the ground, and the stern reality of unmitigated misery reared its blighting aspect instead.

At another period—so venial was the government—a propitiatory sacrifice of money, and, possibly, the infliction of a brief period of imprisonment, would have atoned for almost any crime committed in Spain; but, as already shewn, the authorities were at the time bent on suppressing the illegal traffic which was fast spreading in all directions, and as this was the first instance where resistance, even to the death, had been offered to the laws, the gates of mercy were closed against the offenders, and for them all hope of pardon was extinct.

Any attempt to paint the appalling misery of Pepita, when the circumstances were made known, would fall far short of the real anguish she endured; but as soon as she could collect her scattered senses, sufficiently to dwell with composure on the true state of her bereavement, her resolve was instantly and irrevocably fixed; and though, in some measure, aware of the manifold privations and wretchedness to which that determination must subject her, she forthwith cast away every tie that bound her to home, and boldly avowed she would seek out the hiding-place of her lover, with whom she would dwell in adversity with the same fidelity and truth, as she had once hoped to pass her life in his society, when blessed in happiness and peace.

Brief period sufficed for carrying the project into practice, and in an incredibly short time, El Colorado gathered round him a band of daring spirits, against whom all men's arms were raised, and who, in turn, held their hands uplifted in defiance of the world. Cast among so reckless a set of beings, the mild nature of Pepita underwent a sudden, but not unnatural change. Ever on the alert to face danger from the attacks of the police, or, what was of equally common occurrence, treachery among themselves, the once timid girl passed into the bold and dauntless woman. Enthusiastically believing in her innermost heart,

that each discomfiture or loss which the band sustained, was an additional debt of vengeance due to those who had driven them to become what, of necessity, they were, so did she stimulate each wavering sinner to take a deadly reckoning on whatever wretched menial of the detested dynasty fate might cast within her power. Yet, amid all this unfeminine portrayal of disposition, the love of Pepita for her husband burned bright and unclouded as ever; and if the many deeds of cruelty to which she urged those, over whom she possessed nearly unlimited control, be alleged—as well they might—against her, let it be borne in mind, that the acts of savage bloodshed were perpetrated at the instigation of a half-distracted and uneducated woman, who, in each avenging blow, beheld only a trifling retaliation for those wrongs, which, in her estimation, her husband had so unjustifiably suffered.

Her beauty, though of a far different caste to what it had been, assumed a fixed and commanding appearance, and none would have recognised, in the flashing eye and proudly-curved lip of El Colorado's wife, the meek and downcast maiden, who, but a short time since, could scarce reply to a common question without the eloquent blood suffusing with its crimson glow her fair unwrinkled brow. Yet was she still handsome—perhaps more correctly so than ever; but there was a rapid restlessness in her glance, an earnestness in her every look, and a strange wildness in her manner, that partook more of incipient insanity than of any other passion. And if she were mad, Heaven knows, poor girl, the sights to which she was hourly subjected, were enough to turn the brain of any one far less tenderly nurtured than she had been; and if her better reason trembled on its throne, when the announcement of the overwhelming calamity fell with its blighting influence on the first days of her womanhood, would it not at least be charitable to surmise, that the deeds of desperation afterwards committed, were the fruits of a wandering mind? Whether the authorities viewed the case in this light, or whether moved to pity, or from what other

cause, I know not, but amid the numerous proclamations issued, wherein the oft-repeated promises of pardon and reward were held out to those who would deliver up the band to justice, the name of Pepita was never once inserted in the proscribed list ; neither was the slightest allusion to any woman made use of.

Numberless were the stratagems devised for the capture of the bandit chief, yet, as if he bore a charmed life, and his safety was impervious to the machinations of his enemies, he invariably contrived to escape, and in more instances than one, the result was achieved by the daring spirit of his wife. Yet it was not from his avowed foes alone he had to guard against surprise ; the large sums offered for his seizure proved too captivating a bait, even for his followers ; and the very men who had sworn to stand by him to the death, were those who voluntarily offered to deliver him into the hands of justice, on condition of receiving pardon and the stipulated reward ; neither was an opportunity long wanting for putting their intentions into execution.

Ever ready in persecuting each organ of the Government, El Colorádo heard, with a gloomy satisfaction, that an affluent merchant—in short, a government contractor—was to pass a certain spot on a given day. For reasons of his own, the bandit determined on effecting the capture, with the assistance of Pepita only ; and having well matured his plans, he sallied forth in quest of his victim, disguised as a farmer travelling on his own affairs. The information he received proved correct—as, indeed, was generally the case ; and having, as if by accident, overtaken his intended victim, he so well played his part, that ere they had traversed a league, he established the belief on his companion's mind, that he was an opulent landholder, and a dweller in the adjacent town.

All progressed well ; and on entering the principal street, the supposed farmer suddenly inquired at what place his new acquaintance purposed to rest, and being answered that a *venta* was the only accommodation he could command, Bernardo insisted on the stranger accompanying him home. Nothing loath, the

contractor readily assented, and following his perfidious guide, they soon reached a dwelling in the suburbs; but as it was now dark, and the guest not over well acquainted with the place, he knew not precisely where he was, neither in sooth did he much heed, so that the promised repast and comfortable bed were eventually forthcoming.

At a signal from the host, the door flew open, and on crossing the threshold, a very handsome woman, after a moment's scrutiny, seized a light, and beckoning them to follow, led the way up a long and spiral staircase. Tedious and interminable to the guest appeared the courts and passages through which they passed; and confidence was rapidly giving way to a less agreeable feeling, when they were suddenly ushered into a small chamber, not indifferently furnished for a Spanish room; and having placed the lamp on the table, the female withdrew.

With a somewhat restless eye, the visitor glanced around; nor did his scrutiny tend much to the serenity of his mind, since the apartment appeared built for a prison, possessing neither window nor outlet, save two small grated apertures out of reach, apparently formed for admitting air and light, together with the massive door through which they had just entered.

If the survey of the abode afforded the new comer little satisfaction, the conduct of his host gave less; for having waited until the door was closed, Bernardo deliberately produced from the folds of his cloak two long-barrelled pistols, which, having leisurely cocked, he placed before him on the table, and thus addressed his affrighted companion—

“Senor,” he commenced, on observing the trepidation of his guest, “you need be under no apprehension for your safety, so that you conform to my wishes. Sit you down, and listen;” to which polite invitation the other, scarce knowing what he did, acceded.

“I need hardly now inform you,” continued the outlaw, playing with the locks of his pistols, “that since I had the pleasure of enjoying your society during this day's ride, I have in some

measure changed my character, and instead of the farmer for which you were kind enough to take me, I must now introduce myself to your notice as the well-known El Colorado."

Answer or exclamation from the lips of the horror-struck captive there came none; for remembering well how he had, that very day, abused the dreaded outlaw to his face, he gave himself up as irretrievably doomed to death, and deprived of all power to retain his seat, he gradually slid from his chair, until he reached the ground on all-fours, where he remained perfectly steady, in a paroxysm of fear, patient as a well-trained quadruped waiting to be mounted.

"*Diablo!*" exclaimed the outlaw, laughing at the prostrate contractor, "*hombre! diablo!* what, in the name of the Virgin, are you afraid of? Get up, man, and listen without trembling. Again, I say, I mean not to harm you, for indeed, had such been my intention, I should not have waited until now: but here," he continued, pouring out some wine from a skin placed beside him, "drink, and get courage, and then pay attention to my words, for, in good sooth, I have little time to spare."

Thus reassured, the captive slowly regained his seat, and having swallowed no inconsiderable portion of the liquid, he endeavoured to compose himself as desired.

"Know then," resumed El Colorado, "your visit here was neither unexpected, nor, as shall be proved, will your sojourn in this place be uncared for. In short, you remain here until two thousand dollars be paid for your ransom; that done, you are free to depart: but, until then, I must detain you as my guest; and should it unfortunately happen, that at the expiration of four days, the money be not forthcoming, you may pretty accurately anticipate your doom;" and for fear of any misconception on the part of the captive, Bernardo significantly pointed to his pistols: "in the mean while," he continued, "every thing shall be done to render your stay agreeable: your supper, as I promised, shall be served forthwith, and, for present occupation, I would

recommend these writing materials to your notice, for when the sun sets on the fourth day from this, you are either at liberty to go where you list, or you will little care for any earthly thing from that hour ;” and placing pens and paper before him, El Colorado left his guest to his own thoughts.

There are few alternatives that do not appear preferable to death, when the grim destroyer stands at our elbow, and though the captive loved his dollars dearly, he loved himself still more : having a due regard for his own existence, he handed to his gaoler a letter addressed to one of his partners, in which the two thousand dollars were directed to be placed, in a named spot, without delay ; this done, the epistle was dispatched ; the two persons sat down to supper together, and the miserable wretch was indulged with the society of his entertainer, until an early hour in the morning.

The absence of so wealthy a person as the prisoner, could not fail to excite notice ; and ere six-and-thirty hours had seen him in bondage, it was confidently asserted, and readily believed, he had fallen into the hands of the robbers. Although not participants in this particular outrage, the members of the lawless community were aware of the capture ; yet were they totally ignorant of the place of his confinement ; but instigated by a fresh proclamation, offering additional reward for the rescue of the prisoner, three of the band resolved to sacrifice their chief. With this view, they visited a neighbouring *alcalde*, and disclosing their laudable intent, were readily promised both pardon and money, in return for the accomplishment of their treachery.

To avoid unnecessary excitement, and consequent attempt at rescue, it was resolved the three conspirators should decoy Bernardo into an ambush, where they should be joined by a detachment of lancers, when having overpowered and bound the robber, the military could with speed conduct him out of all chance of escape, and that, moreover, without exciting the attention, which a larger number of soldiers would necessarily occasion.

To accomplish this, the traitors sought out their victim at one of their accustomed haunts, and having, with well-feigned tribulation, declared the military were in pursuit of the band, and at that instant within a few hundred yards of their lurking-place, immediate flight was of course instantly decided on. The spot the robbers fixed on as the scene of their intended treachery, lay in a deep ravine leading towards the mountains; the traitors wisely judging, that in all probability that pass would be chosen by which to ascend to their almost impervious fastnesses. Neither were they mistaken; and, with ill-repressed delight, the confederates heard the command given to follow, into what, they fervently wished, might prove too strong and tangled a web to admit of Bernardo's escape.

El Colorádo, likewise, had *his* reasons for choosing that route, since on the same day the ransom for the contractor was to be deposited in a spot by the mountain side, and Pepita, with two of the most trustworthy of the band, was to proceed in quest of the treasure; thus would he be enabled to join his wife on the way, and together they could retire with their spoil to their sanctuary.

This arrangement was totally unknown to the conspirators, who, never dreaming aid could be near at hand, considered their three selves, together with the lancers, as more than ample for the overthrow of one man. Buoyed up with anticipations of the result of their perfidy, the trio followed the unsuspecting Bernardo; and it was not until a shrill whistle sounded close to his horse's head, that an idea of danger was presented.

But caution came too late, for in a second, the lancers springing from their concealment, and aided by the robbers, disarmed and bound the betrayed brigand, ere he could draw a pistol from his belt.

Finding himself captured, his haughty eye turned with a bitter glance towards his betrayers, who, unable to meet the withering contempt which flashed from every lineament of his expressive features, moved sullenly away, and, as agreed on with the *alcalde*, left the prisoner in custody of the troops.





W. P. ROBERTS

But the shrill whistle, ensuring captivity to the outlaw, fell on other ears than those whom it was intended to summon; it was heard by the ever-watchful Pepita, who, with her escort, had just taken possession of the sum which they came in search of. Instantly she darted with the agility of a fawn through the tangled underwood, until having gained an elevated position, the whole scene enacted, passed as it were in review before her. She saw her husband betrayed, and a captive; and she beheld the three accomplices turn, as if in shame, from contemplating the deed they had so basely perpetrated, and rush hurriedly down an opposite path. Not an instant was to be lost; the lancers were advancing at a quick pace towards the very spot where she had left her two companions: to deliberate for an instant with her, was to resolve; rapidly she regained her friends, and in few words made them comprehend the extent of the calamity, and adjured them to assist in Bernardo's rescue.

"There are but three of them," exclaimed the dauntless woman; "and what care we for *even*—nay nor *double* numbers? Quick—let us post ourselves at the turning of this road, where the vile agents of the accursed government must pass. Let a bullet from each carbine find a home in a soldier's breast; and here," she continued, casting the bag of dollars on the ground, "here is that which shall recompense you for preserving the life of your chief. Now, men, drop on one knee behind these gigantic stones. So—silence—steady your aim! Hush—they come—be ready—fire!" and at the same moment, two lancers hit the dust, never to rise again, while the third, badly wounded, effected his escape; and again Bernardo owed his safety to the courage and gallantry of his wife.

As for the traitors, unconscious of the subsequent events, they appeared to claim their reward; but the tale which the wounded soldier related, seemed to portray them as double traitors, in having handed the escort over to the robbers, little imagining that any of the three lancers could escape to relate the tale.

This, together with having failed in delivering the chief into

bondage, according to their promise, was amply sufficient to seal their doom. They were identified as having been connected with many a scene of bloodshed, and finally they suffered in their own persons the violent and painful death, which they had so frequently inflicted on others.

Such, and in many similar instances, were the escapes of El Colorado from justice; but the time was fast drawing nigh, when his exploits were destined to end, and when the preserving arm of his faithful Pepita should no longer be empowered to shield him from danger, nor avert the deep-laid plans of his relentless foes.

A few short months glided by, and Pepita, the devoted Pepita, was no more. Exhausted both in body and mind—harassed with perpetual watchings and constant alarms—exposed to the scorching rays of the mid-day sun, and alike unprotected from the cold damp dews of night, her slight frame and broken constitution at length sunk under the accumulation of miseries by which she was surrounded, and the once pure and innocent girl breathed her last sigh upon that breast, which, however stained with crime, was to her the casket of all that was generous and good.

From the moment of his wife's death, the bearing of the brigand chief underwent a thorough change. He became gloomy and thoughtful, morose and savage, careless in enterprise, and wholly divested of that energy which had hitherto been ever coupled with his name. Finding therefore that little was to be gained through his instrumentality as a leader, the band once more opened a communication with government, and this time El Colorado was delivered in safety, and without opposition, into the custody of the magistrates of his native village. The story of his former life, and the untoward cause which drove him from his home, were alike forgotten; but the ruthless deeds of the remorseless robber were fresh in the memory of all. For him no eyelash glistened with a sympathising tear—no voice was uplifted in extenuation of his sins; neither did he look for commiseration or pity. With a bold stare of defiance he gazed

around, and conscious that to him no mercy would be extended, his proud spirit forbore to seek in abject entreaty for that which he too well knew would never be accorded.

The proceedings in his case were brief, and ere an hour had elapsed since he entered the hamlet the dread and wonder of the lookers on, the escort was ordered to convey him to Malaga, where final sentence would be passed.

In his way through the village, the road lay by the habitation which once had been his own. It appeared exactly as he had left it, save that it was newly painted, and flowers of various hues were trained around the rustic building. He heard music, and the soft voices of women : men were grouped listlessly around the porch : the appearance of the party arrested their attention : they called the females by name to gaze on the captured robber. Young and blooming faces responded to the summons, and as their blanched cheeks and averted eyes told the detestation with which they gazed on a fellow-creature so stained with blood, El Colorado endeavoured to recollect even one of the many beings who apparently now dwelt in his once-happy home. But the scrutiny was fruitless : he knew them not ; for they were strangers—all.

A little farther, and at the end of the still-smiling hamlet, stood a heap of dark and mouldering ruins ; the garden before the door had long since been trodden down and neglected ; the roof was fallen in ; a few noxious weeds sprung up where the kitchen hearth formerly was placed ; the unglazed window-frames flapped mournfully in the gentle breeze ; and all within the precincts of the crumbling palings spoke of desolation and of death.

For an instant the wretched Bernardo cast a wondering glance at the dilapidated tenement, as if unconscious of what it *had* been ; but as the vivid remembrance of his beloved and ever-constant Pepita sprung up before him in all the radiance of innocence and beauty, as when at first he strained her to his guiltless bosom at the threshold of that now-deserted ruin, the

unbidden tears streamed swiftly, though in silence, down his seared and furrowed cheeks, and the heart of the guilty and captive outlaw was bent and crushed with very anguish to the core.

My story is now fast approaching to a close. The authorities at Olias, apprehending that if, by possibility, again let loose on the community, El Colorado might become more desperate than ever, gave secret instructions to the soldiers, which the termination of this narrative will prove were but too faithfully executed.

"Bernardo!" exclaimed one of the men, as the escort and their prisoner emerged from a deep defile into an open plain, "El Colorado, *amigo mio*, what would you give, were we to connive at your escape?"

The brigand paused for a moment, cast his eyes upon his shackled limbs, and, as if convinced the question was only put in mockery, slowly shook his head without reply.

"Nay, but I am in earnest, man," again repeated the lancer; "nothing easier than to cut the cords that confine you, and then dropping from your saddle, what is there to prevent your regaining your liberty?"

"If I thought you were sincere," replied the robber, his countenance brightening, for to the most wretched life has charms, "if I could believe you sincere, I would guarantee the payment of three thousand dollars, on your presenting a note at Malaga, which, had I materials, could be written here."

"Agreed," replied the soldier; "and, to prove my honesty of intention, I now unbind you," and in accordance with his words, the lancer cut the cords which pinioned his prisoner, and producing writing materials, was speedily put in possession of the coveted paper, together with full instructions as to how and to whom it was to be given.

"I have yet one favour to beg," continued the soldier, as he deposited the order for the money in his breast—"one small boon to ask, and that is the loan of the crucifix hanging round your neck."

“ *This !*” energetically exclaimed the other, “ *this crucifix !* Of what avail can such a trifle be to you ? The intrinsic value can be nothing to a stranger, but to me it is worth more than all the world can offer ;” and pressing the golden relic to his lips, El Colorádo, with a brief farewell, turned to depart. Neither was his progress impeded, until having advanced a few paces, the escort, as if by one accord, levelled their carbines at the retreating figure, and the next moment the robber, the ill-fated El Colorádo, lay bleeding and expiring on the turf.

“ And this, Senor,” exclaimed the lancer, who had detailed the story, “ this, Senor, is the identical cross ;” and drawing forth the emblem of the Catholic faith from his bosom, he offered it for my inspection.

“ And were *you* one of the men who shot him ?” I exclaimed, in a tone of horror and surprise.

“ Truly, Senor,” was the calm reply ; “ and was I not justified in obeying orders ?”

Argument on this point was useless ; therefore, hurriedly lighting my lamp, I collected my still wet garments together, and leaving the escort to recount whatever additional praiseworthy acts they could boast of, I sought the uninviting couch prepared for my repose.

As though to atone for our overnight sufferings, the sun rose in majestic splendour the following morning, and delighted did I feel at quitting my restless bed, where, in spite of fatigue, I found it utterly impossible to sleep.

By what means I was kept awake, I leave to the lively imagination of my readers; while those to whom a Spanish *venta* may be familiar, will not fail in speedily arriving at a correct elucidation of the cause.

Bright as was the morning sun, we were destined to undergo fresh disappointment, for scarcely had the larger portion of our party arrived at the *Venta de los Damajos*, than the rain again descended in torrents.

After a miserable and thoroughly wet ride, we at length drew near the town of Loxa, and slightly prepossessing as was its appearance when viewed through the shower, there was not one among the party who did not joyfully hail the spot destined for our shelter and repose.

A good dinner will effect marvels, not alone by invigorating the frame, but likewise by adding fresh elasticity to the mind; and if a man harbours within his bosom the least tendency towards holding communion with his fellow-mortals, it is at *that* period he will throw aside the accustomed reserve of his nature, and launch forth into friendly converse, with an openness and zest foreign to his more cautious hours.

It was under such inspiring influence that our party gaily laughed on recurring to the miseries they had suffered, yet, although they made light of the difficulties surmounted, not an individual present expressed the least anxiety for a second encounter, and, to obviate so dreaded an annoyance, it was unani-

mously agreed, the whole cavalcade should remain where it then was, be the period ever so protracted, until the weather promised a more agreeable journey.

That point settled, the next question was, in what way could the time be occupied? for here again, as at Seville, that invaluable perpetual mover appeared, in their estimation, to have become somewhat abridged in value, and, as the ladies declared, seeking novelties in the rain at Loxa, was quite a different affair to prosecuting our journey in the wet towards Granada: it was impossible to overrule so indisputable an assertion, and a guide, for the following morning, was accordingly engaged in our service.

Few, if any, were the objects worthy of visitation that escaped our prying scrutiny next day; and so resolved was the whole party to see all that could be shewn, that, ere noon arrived, our guide was sadly at a loss where to turn for further wonders, to appease, what he justly regarded, the most extraordinary mania for sight seeing, that ever afflicted those whom it had been his fortune to escort.

"Matéo!" exclaimed Lord Ashdale, after a long ramble—"Matéo! what are you to shew us now? for my part, I am completely tired; and though we have walked all day, nothing have I beheld, in any degree, sufficiently to repay me for such exertions—where are you taking us now, Matéo?"

"Wherever you please, Senor," replied the obsequious *cicerone*; "I will show you whatever you like."

"Yes, but what else is there to see?" exclaimed his Excellency; "you have promised most liberally, I allow; but how have you redeemed your word?—badly to-day, Matéo," he continued, laughing; "come, confess that nothing remains worth looking at, and you will save your conscience the weight of telling an untruth, and relieve us from much additional walking—come, Matéo, confess."

"Ah, Senors," replied the cunning Spaniard, "you are so impatient you will not give me time; how can I show every-

thing in a moment ? Impossible ! there is much yet to attract, I assure you ;” and here the poor guide, unwilling to lose such good customers, cast his eyes around, as if hoping some extraordinary phenomena might arise to justify his assertion. “ I can confidently assert, Senors,” he continued, “ there are many sights yet to excite your astonishment ; and, now I think of it,” he added, his countenance brightening, as some lucky idea crossed his prolific brain, “ now I think of it, Senors, you have never visited the church of San Juan, a splendid edifice, and well worthy the attention of such honorable *caballeros*.”

As for taking us to see the church dedicated to Saint John, as a sight worthy of notice, so preposterous an idea never would have entered the imagination of our conductor, had he not been closely pressed on the occasion : and, moreover, had not the altercation taken place on the steps of the very edifice so named. In fact, it was the presence of the building itself, and not the recollection of any detail of miracles or remembrance of relics therein contained, that brought the proposition to Matéo’s lips.

Having upwards of an hour yet at our disposal before dinner, we willingly caught at the suggestion offered, and forthwith entered the building.

There was nothing particularly remarkable in the construction of the church, neither were the decorations in any degree splendid, yet it was a large and somewhat lofty structure, having its due proportion of wooden images and tinsel-covered saints, thickly distributed among various paintings, executed no one knew when, and by no one knew whom.

At the moment we made our appearance the music ceased, and the soft cadence from the organ rapidly died away in the distance ; and no sooner had the monotonous chant of the priest succeeded the stilling silence which reigned around, than we noiselessly proceeded along the aisles, to view the different altars, teeming with foil and trash.

It took but a short time to complete our inspection ; and understanding from the guide there would not be any more music

that evening, we were turning towards the entrance, when my eyes fell upon an object which instantly rivetted my whole attention. Exactly in front of an image, supposed to represent the Virgin, and having one silver lamp only suspended before it, knelt the figure of a woman; not that there was anything particularly remarkable in a circumstance which, throughout the twenty-four hours, was of momentary occurrence; but there was an expression in the uplifted countenance, so sweetly touching, yet so deeply tinged with melancholy, that none could have passed that fair suppliant without notice. The attitude in which I beheld her was graceful in the extreme, yet wholly devoid of any theatrical effect, and what in another woman might readily, and perhaps with justice, have been laid to the score of affectation and study, was, in the handsome penitent before me, but the natural and spontaneous connection of the frame, moving in accordance with the energetic pleadings of the mind.

I have had the good fortune to behold many Spanish women in my day, and beautiful beings too, but never had I encountered anything approaching to the seraphic loveliness I then gazed on; her features were as nearly faultless, as it were possible to conceive, and her dark luxuriant tresses were parted in profusion across a brow white and smooth to perfection; still there was a touching expression, an intelligence in each lineament, as though in that beauteous face might be read the very inmost workings of her secret soul, that struck more immediately to the heart of the beholder, than did a perusal of her countenance, unequalled in beauty as it unquestionably was. Her age could not have exceeded twenty, and so intent was she on her devotions, as wholly to disregard the proximity of my companions and myself, all of whom, wrapped in admiration, betrayed, I am reluctantly bound to admit, more astonishment than good breeding, by pausing, as if rooted to the spot beside her.

From this state of contemplation we were speedily aroused by Matéo, who, placing the forefinger of one hand upon his lips, made unequivocal demonstrations with the other of a nervous

anxiety to withdraw us from the church. Little as I felt inclined implicitly to obey his imperious summons, I could not avoid being struck with the change which a few moments had wrought on the colour of his complexion, which, albeit never of a most delicate tint, now assumed an appearance somewhat between lead and blue white.

“*Vamos!*” muttered the agonised guide from between his closed teeth; and seizing Colonel Offersley suddenly by the arm, in an instant they had vanished from the building.

“What is the matter, Matéo?” we all exclaimed, on reaching the street; “what is the meaning of this nonsense?”

“Nonsense!” replied the agitated man, reproachfully; and extending his chest, as though relieved from an oppressive load, he seemed to breathe more freely, while, by degrees, the accustomed hue of saffron overspread his not-at-any-time-particularly-captivating visage.

“*Temblár me hace,*” continued Matéo, “*pero que hermosa es;*” and off he proceeded in the direction of the *posada*, with as little delay as could be afforded. All this very naturally excited our curiosity; but as Matéo was to us wholly unintelligible on the subject we were compelled to seek information elsewhere; when, having made many inquiries, we were eventually put in possession of the following tale, the leading particulars of which having occurred so recently, are yet fresh in the recollection of those who took an interest in the events: the names of the parties are of course hidden under fictitious appellations, but the thread of the story, together with the leading incidents, I have reason to believe, occurred in strict accordance with the details now related under the head of *The Broken Fan*.

# THE BROKEN FAN.

*The head is often the dupe of the heart.*

**ROCKEFORDAULT.**



## THE BROKEN FAN.

ADELAIDA DE SALVADOR was the only offspring, and consequently the sole care of a widowed father, who, doating to folly on the opening beauties and growing perfections of his daughter, turned his thoughts by day and his cogitations by night, towards the means of effecting the primary desire of his heart—a splendid union for his child.

The inhabitants of few countries have undergone such sudden variations of fortune as the Spaniards ; and within the last half century, nobles who were one day basking in all the luxury and enjoyment of wealth, have, on the following morning found themselves deprived of their honours, stripped of their possessions, and frequently compelled to seek personal safety by flight.

Such had been the case with the parents of Adelaida, and truly thankful were they on being permitted to find an undisturbed shelter, although in comparative obscurity at Malaga. Years rolled on, the mother of his child died, and, discarding all his formerly-cherished anticipations of splendour and ambition, the surviving parent determined to devote the remainder of his days in watching and protecting the beautiful creature yet remaining to cheer his close of life.

In undisturbed tranquillity glided on the happy hours of Adelaida's infancy, and well would it have been had the expiring ambition of her father perished, instead of being once more fanned into a flame, which was destined to burn more fiercely than ever.

Our heroine had attained her sixteenth year, when, as if envious of the serenity she enjoyed, the malignant Fates combined to destroy that felicity which, as they could not participate in, seemed but to excite their envy.

The object through whose instrumentality this end was to be effected, appeared in the person of a Spaniard of old and affluent family, the wealth and pride of whose ancestors having accumulated as they descended, reposed in full force in the person of Don Triarto. This coveted prize, in the estimation of the elder ladies, was not in any way remarkable for good or evil : true, he had his eccentricities, and was esteemed somewhat pompous and tiresome in his harangues, but his greatest crime may be quoted, when his inordinate vanity and self-sufficient confidence are mentioned. The Castalian, however, possessed a benevolent heart, in so far as when its promptings to do good in no way interfered with his immediate comfort or convenience : in short, after all his own immediate personal cares and fancies had been gratified, he objected in no degree towards contributing to the pleasure and happiness of others.

Having the highest consideration for his individual merits, Don Triarto never fancied it possible he could meet with a woman worthy to share his name ; and having, moreover, some slight suspicion that his wealth caused the unremitting attentions he invariably received, the worthy gentleman opined, after fifty-three years' cogitation, that it would be as agreeable as prudent to continue until the final termination of his career, in a state of single blessedness.

“ Intentions are one thing, and actions another,” wrote a late novelist ; and so it proved with the Spaniard ; for, notwithstanding the wise resolves and fixed determinations frequently declared, and hitherto acted up to, Don Triarto, on visiting Malaga, no sooner beheld *La Senorita Adelaida*, than he forthwith determined to delay his departure from the town, for the express purpose of cultivating an acquaintance with so faultless and angelic a creature. Small, if any, were the obstacles opposed to the wishes of the rich man, and, in brief period, the proud

Castilian found himself a daily visitor at the abode which contained the attraction of his newly-awakened idolatry.

Then it was, that the ambitious projects of Adelaida's father began to revive, and feelings which for years had lain dormant, sprung up with renewed vigour, as though rest had but added to their strength. Nothing could have found greater favour in his eyes than the marked attention which this new and affluent acquaintance lavished on his child. Presents of all descriptions, and of considerable value, were momentarily conveyed to the house. By degrees, the very mansion assumed a renovated appearance, and all that a short time previous spoke of straightened means, now visibly demonstrated the wealth that must have been bestowed, by the improved aspect of all that Don Salvador was wont to call his own. In short, the new arrival became the declared suitor of the lady ; while, dazzled by the glittering prospects and enormous wealth of his intended son-in-law, the ill-judging parent, regardless of the possibility of entailing misery on his child, and little heeding the disparity of their ages, readily chimed in with the wishes of his guest, and resolved to sacrifice what he most loved on earth, at the accursed shrine of Mammon.

And what were the feelings of the poor girl, while the sordid barter for a human being was in progress ? did *she* enter into the views which animated her parent in the traffic ?—did this fair and lovely creature dwell on the possession of gold, as the thing most worthy to be coveted on earth, and before which all considerations should succumb ? Far from it ; her's was a heart, soft and ingenuous as ever throbbed in woman's breast ; her mind was attuned to the best and kindest feelings of our nature, and not a thought, or transient wish, animated her bosom, that might not have stood the searching eye of purity itself.

To such a woman, we may well imagine the effect of the shock when first acquainted with her parent's views ; for, however "convenient and desirable" such matches may often

be accounted among those where the heart has little voice in the transaction—so wholly unacquainted was Adelaida with the tortuous ways and crooked labyrinths of the worldly, that neither sophistry nor explanation could convince her why she should be wedded to an old gentleman whom she exceedingly disliked, and whose age more than trebled her own. It was an enigma, which she found it impossible to solve; but it required much less penetration than Adelaida possessed to arrive at the conclusion, that whatever might be *her* wishes in the matter, and however deeply her happiness might be involved, any decision arrived at on the subject by her, would weigh but lightly in the balance, when placed in opposition with the determination of her parent.

Yet, in justice to the father, while his avarice cannot be otherwise than deprecated, still it should not be forgotten, that at the moment he was undermining his child's happiness for ever, the misguided man felt inwardly convinced he was adopting the course, of all others, whereby to ensure her opulence, and, as *he* thought, felicity combined; for there *are* persons who deem the one indissolubly linked with the other, and Don Salvador was no exception to the rule.

Whether the excessive earnestness with which the lovely victim daily, nay, almost hourly, besought her father for release from the detested union, arose from some secret attachment to another, none can say; yet, among the many who occasionally visited at the house, there was one whose affection for Adelaida was but too conspicuously apparent among his friends, in almost every act he exhibited, and by each word he uttered; but whether the feeling was reciprocal, and whether the devoted homage which her young and handsome cousin seemed existing but to offer, found any responsive sentiment in the lady's heart, how can we discern; certain, however, was it, that notwithstanding the admitted intention of speedily bestowing the hand of his daughter on Don Triarto, the father of the devoted bride seemed rather to encourage than repel the multitudinous visits of his nephew; perhaps he

was unaware of the misery which each succeeding interview with Adelaida engrafted in his relation's inmost soul, or probably so engaged was he in perfecting his favourite project, that the possibility of an unportioned boy raising his thought to her who was already destined to be the wife of a millionaire, never for an instant intruded on his imagination. This, however, can be but conjecture; yet all save the parent and his fair daughter seemed aware of the anguish which was rapidly accumulating, to be suddenly hurled down upon the devoted head of the noble and high-minded youth.

The sand, in time's glass, never can stand still; and whether the medium through which mortals view its progress invest the falling particles with a golden hue, or fashion them to the dull sluggish motion, which to the impatient may appear endless, nevertheless, unchecked by the one and unpropelled by the other—the hours glide leisurely along.

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My readers must imagine two months have elapsed; but in that brief period, what events of moment had occurred! Adelaida, notwithstanding her entreaties and earnest supplications for mercy, had become the wedded partner of a man whom her heart told her she could never learn to love; the ambition of the parent was appeased, and the happiness of the daughter was for ever sacrificed. But two months, two short months, had rolled by since Adelaida stood at the altar, the fairest specimen of loveliness, whose light step ever pressed the marble pavement of the house of God; beautiful, most beautiful she appeared; but there was a contraction of the mouth, a vacant look, and almost unnatural brilliancy about her eyes, that could not be mistaken as symbols of a mind at ease. There stood the victim, pale and immoveable as a statue; and when the ceremony concluded which for ever bound her in duty and obedience to the being she detested, she suffered him to lead her from the congratulatory presence of her friends, as if totally unconscious of the prominent part it had been her hapless fate to enact.

It has been stated, that but two short months had passed, but how changed in that brief time had Adelaida become; thoughtful, and with her brow ever clouded, she moved with the living mass, among whom it was her husband's pride and chief pleasure to exhibit her; but the sweet smile that formerly dimpled on her lovely cheek had passed away—no jocund laugh was sent in silvery cadence from her lips—joy was a stranger to her breast—her hopes and bright anticipations of felicity were cast down—the heart of the poor girl was crushed, and Adelaida de Triarto was miserable.

Wrapt as he was within himself, still it was impossible for Don Triarto to do otherwise than notice the sudden change in his wife's manner—from joy to pain—from happiness to grief; neither did the quick transition tend, in any degree, to feed the flame of his self-love; but whatever might have been the cause from whence it originated, the true secret lay concealed beyond his penetration, the acuteness of which formed no prominent part of his character. Chagrined, at length, at the inanimate bearing of his bride, and having vainly taxed his imagination for a clue by which to elucidate the mystery, the disconcerted bridegroom summoned to his councils one, whose superiority of intellect over that of his friend, could only be equalled by his unparalleled cunning and duplicity.

It so chanced, that never, until this powerful ally was brought into play, had Don Triarto harboured the—to him—preposterous idea, that, under any circumstances whatever, could it be possible than an union with himself, should be contemplated by the object of his choice, with feelings otherwise than of self-congratulation, and consequently it was with no small surprise, mingled with doubt, that he listened to his friend's insinuation, that it *was* within the scope of probability, the lady might have conceived an attachment for some other person, more congenial to her feelings, than the sentiments she experienced in behalf of her husband; but when, at length, the idea *did* take root, where the adviser intended it should flourish, the facility with which it

strengthened and expanded, astonished even him, in whose breast the noxious seed was planted.

It were unnecessary to recapitulate the various and connecting hints that were dropped to substantiate the idea, but which having been sedulously engrafted on a weak mind, forbade the possibility of extermination; circumstances, which, in themselves were nothing, were readily grasped at by the colleagues, and when viewed in connection with occurrences though equally evanescent, the accumulated suspicions bade fair to render the enraptured husband particularly uncomfortable indeed.

The object on whom their notice rested, was of course the young and handsome cousin of the lady, of whom mention has previously been made, and who, unable to tear himself from the presence of her whom he regarded as a being of a superior order, might still be found, whenever opportunity offered, within the magic influence of her presence, and from whose society he vainly struggled to withdraw, even with the consciousness that to linger near a spot so hallowed, could tend but to bring destruction on himself, and possibly might engulf her whom he worshipped in the same abyss. With much craft and secrecy, the actions—nay, the very glances of the unsuspecting parties, were watched, and frequently motives were attributed to actions, which, in truth, had their foundation in nothing, save the erroneous conclusions their enemies arrived at. Still, nothing decisive could be gathered—no real act of impropriety was detected; and while the jealous husband panted for an opportunity openly to avow his suspicions, he was reluctantly compelled to smother his unenviable feelings, in the absence of any definite proof which could justify harsh measures in the opinion of his acquaintances.

Such was the state of affairs, when one delicious evening in summer, Don Triarto led his passively-obedient wife towards the accustomed promenade; and as the ill-assorted pair strolled slowly along, many were the surmises and half-uttered expressions of surprise at beholding her, who but a short time since had so pre-eminently ranked amid the most beautiful women in Malaga,

saunter listlessly by the passing groups, unheedful of the gaiety of the scene by which she was encircled.

"Adelaida," hesitatingly murmured a well-known voice beside her, "if not intruding on your society, may I have the honour of joining your party in the walk?"

As the first accents fell on her ear, the young bride, taken by surprise, turned her head rapidly round, and her fine eyes encountering the ingenuous countenance of her youthful relative, the rebellious blood, rushing to her temples, suffused her handsome features with the crimson tide. Not so her companion, who, equally and interestedly moved by the words dropped from the lips of the speaker, contracted his dark eyebrows into a demoniac frown, and briefly bowed that assent to the request, which common courtesy, and the custom of the country, forbade him to negative.

"The Alameda appears gayer this evening than it has been for a long period," again ventured the intruder, nothing daunted by the imperious reception he encountered at the hands of him whom he imagined he had best cause to hate on earth; "but," he continued, as if determined to draw the lady into conversation,—"but, if I mistake not, you can scarcely judge the difference, since I do not think you have honoured the *pasado* for some days with your presence?"

"Dona de Salvador must feel highly gratified, *Senor*, at the interest you apparently take in her movements," replied the husband, with a sinister scowl on his visage, by no means indicative of the placidity of his temper.

"Oh, as for that," laughingly rejoined the other, determined not to take offence, whereby he alone could be the loser, "of course it is but natural one should take an interest in the welfare of his friends, among whom I hope to be ever permitted to enrol Dona de Triarto; besides which, is it possible that the brightest ornament of Malaga can withdraw herself from one of our national amusements, without her absence being noticed?"

There was nothing in the meaning which the words conveyed,





beyond the complimentary style indulged in by the Spaniards, but there was a tone in the voice, and a manner with which the remark was uttered, that struck at once to the heart of the young girl ; but what the exact nature of her feelings may have been, none can take upon themselves to aver, nor at this period of my tale is it incumbent to conjecture.

Poor Adclaida ! far severer trials yet awaited you than even the persecuting supplications of one whose very name you strove to erase from your recollection, and the odious endearments of him whose jealous presence your soul detested.

In course of time, the trio were joined by various groups bent on the twofold errand of enjoying the delicious coolness of the evening, and as elsewhere, detracting from the character of all who came within their notice. In the animated conversation and agreeable sallies which without a pause enlivened the stroll, Adclaida took no part, but with a tact befitting a more experienced manœuvrer, the young cousin, leaving the side of his fair relative, yet not relinquishing his claim as one of the party, joined, with apparent zest, the mirth of the merriest of the group.

This line of conduct not a little puzzled the suspicious husband, and he was revolving in his mind whether it would be better to withdraw his wife homeward, under the plea of lateness of the hour, and thus get rid of the noxious presence of his persecutor altogether, when he encountered an old and much-esteemed friend in the centre of a party then passing.

Instantly his doubts and jealousies vanished into air, and anxious for many important reasons not to miss the opportunity thus offered, Don Triarto, acting on the impulse of the moment, resigned his wife into the care of her companions, and pursued his friend, who had already passed him some paces.

No sooner had his rival resigned the place he had tenaciously kept during the walk, than the cause of all her husband's jealous fears stood there in his stead.

" Adclaida !" whispered the enamoured boy, " Adclaida, for

the love of Heaven, speak to me!—one word—one look of kindness from you, Adelaida, and I am content. But oh, cast me not thus from you—do not avoid me as you have lately done! Tell me, I implore you, tell me how, and in what way I have offended you—*you*, for whom I would gladly sacrifice existence, if it were possible, ten thousand times over?”

“Hush, for mercy’s sake, hush!” replied the trembling girl. “Persecute me no further. It is useless to revert to what *might* have been; let us now view calmly what we are. If you regard me, never see me more: your presence but adds to my misery, which, God knows, needs not further aggravation.”

“Anything—everything will I do as you command, Adelaida,” he exclaimed, “but drive me not away in anger! If I must leave you, give me a glove—a fan—some trifle to doat on in my madness when distant from you—perhaps for ever! and, Adelaida, God grant you may never feel remorse at having broken *that* heart, which ever *has* been, and, by Heaven! ever *shall* be yours, and yours alone.”

“This is cruel and ungenerous, Giberto: leave me, oh, leave me, I implore you!” sobbed the terrified wife; “my husband may return instantly!” and here her excessive agitation precluded further utterance; but, stretching forth her hands in the most energetic manner, she motioned him to comply with her request.

Had not the presence of so many spectators brought the half-distracted boy to reason, he would have clasped his beloved Adelaida to his breast, and dared the universe to force her from him; but he so far restrained the mad impetuosity of his nearly-ungovernable feelings, as sufficiently to check the first insane promptings of his thoughts; yet, notwithstanding the evident distress under which his cousin suffered, and although her supplication for his departure still rung in his ear, he could not avoid the supposition, that her outstretched arm, holding within the small transparent hand the very boon he had so earnestly craved, was voluntarily proffered for his acceptance: here was proof

sufficient of her regard—the confession, though not in words, which he had so frequently and almost hopelessly prayed for—was evidently acknowledged by one simple act.

But an instant elapsed, while these thoughts rushed hurriedly through his brain; and in the next, he had secured the coveted fan, and concealed the treasure in his bosom.

Rapid as the act was, yet not so adroitly was it executed as to elude notice; and he whose eyes were the least desirable as a witness, returned to his wife's side in sufficient time to observe that something had been delivered to the other, without being able precisely to ascertain what the gift might have been; and lest any doubt on the subject should remain, the dreadfully-agitated countenance of the lady plainly betrayed some circumstance of no trivial import having occurred.

At the moment no remark escaped on either side; and in a few minutes, the cause of all this mischief, mingling with another group, hurried rapidly to his home, there to brood over hopes, which, however erroneously encouraged, he dared to cherish; while the enraged husband communed within himself, what possibly could have been the transfer so suddenly bestowed upon his rival; and having minutely reckoned over in silence the trinkets and ornaments his wife had that evening worn, he recollected, before he reached his mansion, that the indispensable appendage to a Spanish lady's costume was missing—the fan, the fatal fan.

\* \* \* \* \*

The cloak of midnight was cast over the town, and scarcely a human being appeared in the then deserted streets, save some few wretches, whose nightly dwellings were on the cold, hard stones. The wind had much increased since the hour when the joyful group thronged the lively Pascadéro, and ever and anon strong gusts of chilly air swept round the unsheltered corners of the houses, driving before them huge drops of rain. A storm was evidently approaching, and the miserable outcasts who had vainly sought shelter for the night, crowded closer and closer to

the portal, that, but in a trifling degree, shielded them from the tempest, but which, nevertheless afforded a temporary relief, the small indulgence whereof their very fellow-creatures refused to bestow.

Louder, and with increased violence, blew the wind; the heavy sound of falling rain was succeeded by a deluge of water from the clouds; every instant the gloom settled into darker night, save when, now and again, a vivid flash of lightning for an instant lit up the scene with its awful brilliancy.

Unmoved by the commotion of the elements, and regardless of the storm, one figure alone was visible on the *Alemáda*, from out the many thousands that daily thronged the busy city, and that person closely enveloped in his cloak, and reclining against the branches of a wide-spreading *valambrosa*, gazed on the house before him, unconscious of all, save the violence of uncurbed passion raging in his breast.

There was but one human being within the boundaries of Malaga, whose uncontrolled and ill-disciplined mind could have led him forth on such a night, merely to gaze upon the tene-ment of a woman, whom he madly, though hopelessly adored. Hour succeeding hour, found Giberto on the same spot, and nearly in the same position, for neither the exercise of his reason, nor the closest mental examination, could convince him that the bestowal of the fan, was otherwise than a tacit acceptance of his professions of love. In vain did common sense, and a vivid remembrance, point out, that, on no occasion whatever, had the object of his ill-judged attachment permitted the slightest advance, beyond what a long-connected friendship might admit; never, by word or deed, had Adelaida, since her betrothal, attempted to raise the most distant hope in his bosom; yet in this one act, premeditated as he fondly imagined, the infatuated youth beheld each icy barrier removed, and momentarily anticipated some visible manifestation of his mistress's regard.

Deluded boy! could he but have been convinced that the

deed in which he so gloried—the action, trivial as it was on which was based his anticipations of felicity—could he but have known that nothing was more diametrically opposed to the virtuous determination of the unhappy wife, than, for one instant, voluntarily to permit her cousin to imagine encouragement could be given from her, when, to listen even to the outpourings of his overcharged heart, she was well aware must be regarded as deadly sin! could he, I repeat, but have brought his ill-disciplined and ungovernable passions into subjection, how much misery might have been averted from those, on whom destruction was about to hurl his poisoned shafts with so true an aim.

Long and mournfully tarried Giberto, his eyes fixed on the casement, from whence, but how vainly, he cherished the wild hope that a signal might be made, or, at least, some trivial notice taken, by which a knowledge of his vigil would be conveyed; but no—all was dark and apparently deserted, until, at length, the grey streak of day, breaking on his vigil, warned him to depart, ere yet too late to avoid the observation of others.

Sadly the desponding lover turned towards his home, his mind far too agitated to regard, even for an instant, the saturated state of the dripping garments he instinctively wrapt around him. Wretched and fatigued, he reached his dwelling, when, rushing to his chamber, he cast himself upon his couch; a harrowing feeling of faintness overcame his senses, and, for a brief period, he sank into total forgetfulness of existence.

Painful was it to behold one so young and handsome, yielding, without a struggle, to the evil temptings of his vicious nature—yet the disposition of Giberto had, hitherto, been considered worthy of admiration. Mild and affectionate in his manners, the esteem and partiality of his acquaintance were invariably enlisted in his behalf. Brave, generous, and gay, he had ever been regarded as the principal promoter of innocent enjoyments, and few were the *tertúlias*, or other entertainments, deemed complete, if the animated countenance of Giberto was not

there to enliven the scene. Yet now how changed; the once blooming look had rapidly made way for the sunken eye and pallid cheek. As he lay unconscious on the bed, his breast heaved with the oppression of deep and heavy sighs: at one instant, his teeth were clenched, his brow contracted, and the whole frame dilated with passion—while in the next, a calm serenity passed across his countenance, and the fast-falling tears rapidly trickled down his wan and faded features. And, wherefore was this sudden change—this most unnatural alteration from all that was gay and amiable, to the very verge of moroseness, and the development of many an unamiable feeling? Instead of the bland suavity of manner so prepossessing in youth, and so well and deservedly esteemed, the unfortunate boy would now shun, with a feeling of detestation, aught that broke in upon his solitude, and never did he mingle with his fellow-men, save in the one great hope of being for an instant blessed with a glimpse of her who, to him, was worth all the world beside.

Watch the convulsive twitching of the closed hand, clasping in its powerful grasp, though unconscious what it holds, the one great treasure of his soul—the only tangible memorial of her now lost to him for ever: but an instant, while yet labouring under the power of the trance, he raises the fatal symbol to his lips; and then, need any one inquire what afflicts the mind, and rapidly advances to undermine the health of the young and graceful form, thus suffering from his insane passion?

At length he awoke from this dreadful slumber; the sun had by that time cast his broad glare of light into the room, searching each crevice of the apartment; in fact, it was noon, and when Giberto slowly raised his hands to his burning forehead, in the endeavour to collect his scattered faculties, a throbbing head-ache, and almost bursting pulse, recalled him to a sense of his imprudence and his woe, having, for so many hours, remained in garments saturated with the last night's deluge: the glare of light falling directly on his sight, occasioned excessive pain, so much so, that, involuntarily closing his

eyelids, he sought relief in darkness. Yet, during the brief period that enabled him to recognise the familiar objects scattered about his apartment, could it be possible that he distinctly traced the outline of a figure bending over him, or was it delusion to suppose that a face, never to be forgotten, peered fiercely on his countenance? Improbable as the circumstance was, it agitated him at the moment in no trifling degree; unnerved, wretched, and sadly debilitated through illness and mental distress, he yet determined not to give way to so pusillanimous a feeling, but resolved instantly to arise.

With some difficulty he succeeded in moving his person from the position in which he rested, and was on the point of altering his recumbent position, when the rough grasp of a masculine hand, compelled him to remain where he was.

Suspicion of mental or optical error was instantaneously banished, and turning towards the intruder, his countenance sunk beneath the steady and malignant gaze of his mortal foe, Don Triarto.

"By what right, Senor," gasped out Giberto, the moment astonishment and agitation suffered him to give utterance to words, "by what right, Senor, dare you intrude thus upon my privacy, and force yourself even within my sleeping apartment?"

"By what right, inquire you?" slowly and with a most malicious expression repeated the other.

"Ah, Senor! I again repeat—by what right have you thus encroached upon my retirement? By what right, once more I demand, come you here?"

"By the right of an injured husband!" answered Don Triarto, pallid almost to ghastliness with rage; "by the right," he continued, gradually raising his voice to its highest pitch, "by the right which all men have to detect villany and punish crime! by the right of maintaining my honour! and, dearer to me than all these—the right of seeking deep and ample vengeance for my wrongs!"

Giberto was no coward, and although taken by surprise, at so disadvantageous a moment, still he had, for a long period, rendered his mind familiar with the idea, that the line of conduct he so assiduously pursued, must, at perhaps a not very distant date, occasion an interview of a somewhat-similar description. Bracing, therefore, his unstrung nerves, as best he could, he resolved boldly to encounter whatever might betide, in a manner neither to disparage himself in his own opinion, nor disgrace the cause in which he so fruitlessly laboured.

For a few seconds neither party spoke, when, dexterously evading the grasp of his opponent, Giberto nearly gained his freedom, but was once more compulsorily seized by the efforts of his enemy, united with the aid of the person whose insidious counsels had so prosperously worked the mischief then in progress.

“Young man,” commenced in turn this officious friend, “vainly may you struggle against the superior strength which now presses on you! ay, and as vain will your utmost efforts prove to escape from the vengeance—the retributive justice you so fully merit! Even at this instant,” continued the jealous partizan, “at this very moment, whilst I am speaking, and while the injured husband of the dishonoured wife gazes on your writhing form, now, even now you clasp within your trembling hands the damning evidence of your crime, and proof of the participation of your paramour in guilt!”

“Guilt!” exclaimed the youth, exasperated nearly to frenzy at the charge, “guilt! never!—’tis false—false as your own loathed words—villanous as your every act! Unhand me, wretch! for by every saint in heaven, I swear never to quit your side in the light of the blessed day, or in the dark hour of midnight, until your foul blood washes out the dark stain which your polluted lips have dared to utter.”

“Peace, driveller—peace,” replied Don Triarto, clutching from the now almost powerless hold, the very fan, which, but a few hours previously had been in the possession of Adelaida;

“vain are your threats here—useless your assertions ; have we not test—ay, and convincing assurance of your falsehood in the silent presence of this accursed bauble ?” and tearing the painted ornament into shreds, he cast the useless fragments from him.

“Thus perish all who madly rouse our vengeance,” chimed in his companion, pressing with additional strength the half suffocated form beneath him.

“Tarry awhile,” interfered the husband, whose whole frame quivered with emotion ; “crimes like his deserve a far severer punishment than merely death ; torture—why not torture first !” he cried exultingly, as together they bound the now unresisting boy to the bed he lay on.

“The craven shrinks,” shouted, or rather screamed, Triarto, as with demoniac joy he drew his sharp *cuchillo* across the undefended bosom of his rival. “Happiness, such as you have found, young man,” he added with ironical bitterness, “cannot be too dearly purchased. Oh ! Dunstano,” turning towards his companion in brutality, “methinks we might, without much labour improve these fascinating features, which have brought their possessor into so enviable a dilemma ? ’Twould be rare sport to see the next fond meeting between the lovers, after our wholesome discipline. Think you, Dunstano, she would know the whimpering boy again ?” and staggering from excitement, jealousy, and hatred, the vindictive old man would have fallen to the ground had he not supported himself against the wainscot.

Equally remorseless, and by nature habitually cruel, Dunstano stood calmly by, gloating on the sufferings which the victim underwent from each incision of the knife, when slowly drawn across his face, and but a very brief continuance of the torments would have sufficed to have added murder to the crime then perpetrating.

But it was otherwise ordained, for hardly had Don Triarto moderated his passion so as partially to bring his energies within control, than the blood, impelled with immense force, burst from

the mouth, ears, and nostrils of their victim, and in a second deluged the bed with gore ; his eyelids partially closed, and the orbs remained fixed ; the face, from being flushed reverted to an ashy paleness ; the jaw fell, and though the purple stream continued to flow from each corner of the mouth, life appeared to have left for ever the now disfigured tenement of clay.

"He is dead," coolly remarked Dunstano, folding his arms, and earnestly regarding the body. "Triarto, your enemy is no more ; come, let's away," and suiting the action to the word, he cast one long searching look upon the mutilated form, and immediately turned towards the door.

"Dead !" repeated his friend, in a dull hollow accent. "Dead, Dunstano ! murdered—and by me ? Impossible !" But being soon convinced of the apparent accuracy of the assertion, he suffered himself to be led from the chamber, unconscious whither he bent his steps, and scarcely knowing by whom guided.

In some natures, where passion is allowed undisputed sway, and where the violence of ill-subjugated feelings are permitted unrestrained dominion, the sudden removal of a cause of deadly hatred, has, in a moment, worked so total a revulsion in the system, so powerful, and with such suddenness acting on the over excited nerves, that, in many instances, death unlooked for—instantaneous death has resulted.

The agony which Don Triarto experienced, reached not by many degrees to so fearful a crisis ; yet the awful removal from this world of the being whom he believed he had so mercilessly, and in so cowardly a manner, slain, quelled in an instant his more violent rage, leaving on his mind a suspicion somewhat akin to doubt, as to whether his boundless fury had not prematurely, and possibly unjustly, marked Giberto as its victim.

What steps, if any, were taken by the authorities remain unknown, but possibly none, as the prognostic of Dunstano was not on that occasion destined to be fulfilled, for what he considered sufficient indication of death, eventually proved the means whereby Giberto partially recovered.

The many causes already detailed, coupled with the boundless passion which so impetuous a youth could not otherwise than harbour, on finding himself in the power of his adversaries, was sufficient to send the blood through his veins with an irresistible impetuosity, which, had it not found egress by the bursting of some minor vein, must inevitably have caused death. As it was, the relief bestowed by the hemorrhage, when insensible and wholly prostrated in strength, eventually restored him to life, and granted him sufficient power to encounter the terrible ordeals yet in store.

Bitter pangs of remorse may have lurked in the breast of the enraged husband, when impressed with the conviction that the only being who had dared to cross his path was now no more; yet no sooner were his melancholy forebodings dispersed by the credited assertion that his rival still existed, than the unquenchable flame again struggled into life, dispelling in an instant every better feeling striving for the mastery. Once more was the counsel and assistance of Dunstano called into request, and readily was the summons responded to; for in bad hearts there is a secret satisfaction in committing iniquities, which by others would be regarded with horror and disgust.

Long and tedious passed the period of Giberto's convalescence, and when at last he arose from his bed of sickness, the mutilated object, with scarce sufficient strength to draw his enfeebled limbs across the chamber, would by few persons have been recognised as the once handsome boy, who but a short time since added, with the brilliancy of his wit, and engaging kindness of manner, to the happiness of all who came within the influence of his spell.

What had he now to live for! Was it possible the hideous object too faithfully portrayed in his mirror, could inspire feelings in a breast, which, during the days of his glory, had resisted all his blandishments unscathed? Could he suppose, that *that* being whose sense of rectitude had withstood his every practised art, when luxuriating in the zenith of youth and comeliness, would now resign all and everything for so loathsome a creature

as himself? Banish the insane thought! never—never could so preposterous a notion harbour in his mind; and incredible as it may sound, nevertheless perfectly true, the nearly maddening passion which for so long, and with such withering effect, had literally held his soul captive, to the exclusion of his better sense, now faded away as in a mist, and without any perceptible effort on his part, leaving the wide field of his energies open to an equally absorbing furor—the thirst, the unquenchable panting for—Revenge.

No sooner did his decreasing indisposition permit, than he hastily despatched a friend to demand at the hand of his enemies, that reparation, which, as a gentleman, he insisted on claiming, but which both parties appealed to, treated with the most sovereign contempt, adding deeper injury to that already inflicted by the arrogance and coarseness of their replies.

Stung to the quick, again and again the unhappy youth sought that *amende* which his adversaries were equally determined to withhold; but although they declined a contest in the field, nothing that ingenuity could effect, or money purchase, was wanting to disseminate, in all directions, tales, falsehoods, and inuendoes, to the deep prejudice of Giberto's character.

Unconscious of the cause, with the deepest anguish, the miserable young man beheld his friends—nay, even his nearest and dearest associates—withdraw from his society, as though he were an object to be shunned, or one whose presence must necessarily contaminate those who approached him; not an avenue was left open for redress, deeply and irreparably as he had been injured; where could he look for consolation? the world seemed closed for ever on his hopes; his happiness was irretrievably blasted, never to revive; his friends had cast him off; strangers avoided him, and he passed along *among* them as though unknown to all. Every kindly channel of his heart froze up, every gentle feeling was plucked as a noxious weed from his bosom, and spurning each tie that should have bound him to his fellow men, he rushed to the altar of his patron saint, and

there impiously, in the very house of God, swore to devote each moment of his future existence towards effecting the sole earthly gratification remaining to him—Revenge !

In conformity with this resolve, Gilberto disposed of his effects; and causing it to be promulgated through Malaga that he was on the point of leaving the hateful town for ever, made instant preparation for departure.

On the day fixed, and at the most public hour, the carriage conveying the voluntary exile drove past the Alemáda, and, amid the self-congratulations of the inhabitants at having got rid of so objectionable a resident, he dashed by the assembled groups, and soon left every vestige of the city far behind him.

The flight of Giberto, for a time furnished observation for the idle, who daily thronged the *Paseadéro*; but when at length report reached their ears that he had died in a foreign and a distant land, men forgot to bear in mind he ever had existed; much less did they remember that the poor forsaken wretch had once been their townsman and their friend—his very name ceased to pass their lips, and Triarto and his companion went on their way rejoicing, as though such a person as Giberto never had existed.

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Three years expired since the circumstances described took place, and still Don Triarto dwelt in Malaga, and daily might be seen—his wife hanging on his arm—taking his accustomed stroll. Little or no difference was perceptible in his demeanour, since I first introduced him to my readers; but in the pale yet still beautiful being by his side, it would have baffled the ingenuity of the most discerning, to have recognised the frank and joyous countenance of Adelaida de Salvador.

There is a certain distinction among all classes of society, which is voluntarily tendered to wealth, and wherever money may be found, will a host of sycophants, no matter what their rank, hover around, offering their homage to its possessor.

Exactly in this position stood Don Triarto; his extensive

possessions purchased attention and respect; his marriage contributed to enlarge his acquaintance, and his generally placid and unruffled manner, studiously courteous, had so gained him the friendship of the best families in the neighbourhood, that he resolved to fix on Malaga as his permanent abode, and accordingly entered into all that interested the community, and became, in brief time, one of the leading characters of the place.

\* \* \* \* \*

It was the anniversary of some fête, the precise occasion of which the narrator omitted to detail, when the affluent husband threw open his splendid mansion, for the amusement of all who classed themselves within the pale of his acquaintance. For days past, much had been expected from the extensive scale of preparation, and the well-known opulence of the donor of the feast; and with light hearts, and joyous anticipations of pleasure, hundreds moved towards the festive scene, on the night of which I am now writing. Nothing that could add to the dazzling brilliancy of the fête had been omitted. Thousands of lights illuminated the vast corridors of the building—music, with the voluptuous melody of song, was heard at intervals from the various chambers, while the incipient sound of the time-beating castanet, bore testimony to the zeal with which the national dance was indulged in.

Not a person of distinction, for miles around, but received a summons to the banquet, and, from amid the loveliest of the dark-eyed daughters of Spain, many had been drawn thither to enhance the splendour of the all-but fairy land. Beauty, in her most captivating form, might there have found a living representation, and many young hearts, elate with rapture at the prospect of the night's amusement, were taught, ere the magic influence of the hour fled by, they were yet capable of harbouring fresh and pleasureable feelings, which, until then, had slumbered in their bosoms unawakened.

All seemed mirth and joy; yet, amid the countless multitude of smiling faces, and, in many instances, truly happy beings,

who wandered, in a delighted maze of felicity, from one apartment to the other, engrossed with the novelty of whatever met their astonished gaze, few would have exchanged their own sensations, at that moment, for the possession of all the pageantry and magnificence around, if accompanied with the deeply-rooted sorrow engrafted on the heart of the mistress of the revels.

From her lips the subject, on which it is more than probable she ever dwelt with an interest surpassing all others, was never known, even by her dearest friends, to find utterance: nevertheless, can it be doubted but the memory of one who, towards *her* at least, had ever evinced the most passionate devotion, was fixed indelibly on the tablets of her memory?

Almost from the days of infancy, each occurrence giving interest to the hour which, in any degree, was coupled with a retrospection of pleasure, unavoidably wound itself with the too-familiar portrait of him, whose greatest crime consisted in having loved her, not "too wisely," but with a maddening intensity of passion, which, finally breaking down all barriers, hurried its victim into those insane acts which eventually terminated in an ignominious end. Still *Adelaida* was a woman, and although wedded, if not actually by force, certainly through interested persuasion and mistaken notions of duty; and notwithstanding the confidence she experienced from a knowledge of the firmness of her character, and hitherto unshaken determination to uphold her spotless reputation, not only in appearance, but reality, unblemished to the world, yet is it not probable that her thoughts would oftentimes recall the image of him whose worship towards her bordered on idolatry? Justly might I be reproved for the attempt to cast a slur on the better feelings of human nature were I to conjecture otherwise; and the almost-broken heart of poor *Adelaida* was not one to gaze unmoved on the rapid downfall of him, whose irreparable ruin had its origin from no one cause, except his all-engrossing attachment towards herself.

Light and joyous was the laugh emerging from every portion

of the mansion, and all that man could imagine as conducive towards happiness was there collected for enjoyment to profusion.

At length the banquet was announced ; again a fresh impetus was given to the moving mass that thronged the halls, and each turned towards the apartments which were now, for the first time, thrown open for the night.

Let it suffice that the ulterior arrangements were in perfect keeping with the preceding ones : wine, love, and music, held undisputed sovereignty, and all revelled as though they existed but for that hour alone.

Some delightful voice, well disciplined to harmony and attuned with natural sweetness, had just concluded a soft plaintive air, when the liberal donor of the feast, delighted at the success of his entertainment, and gratified at the visible happiness demonstrated by those around him, rose to propose a toast connected with the occasion. The announcement was, of course, rapturously responded to. Each crystal goblet sparkled to the brim with the most delicious wines—every one rose—the eyes of all were upon their host, who, from the head of the principal table, courteously saluting his guests, was on the verge of giving utterance to the sentiment, when a servant hurriedly crossed to where his master stood, and whispered a few words into his ear. What the exact import of the message might have been was never known, but, moved by the information it conveyed, Don Triarto hurriedly replaced his untasted wine upon the board, and, making a scarcely-audible excuse, hurried from the spot, leaving his friends mute with astonishment, standing with uplifted glasses, ready to do honour to whatever pledge their host had been about to utter.

As her husband quitted the apartment, Dona Adelaida was remarked by some to turn deadly pale—a circumstance carefully treasured, and afterwards circumstantially remembered to her disadvantage. A pause, the more remarkable from the before joyous temperament of the party, now succeeded, and as every

person turned to watch the retreating figure of their host, an oppressive feeling of anticipated evil pervaded the assembled mass. Slightly bowing to his astonished guests, the master of the feast passed through the open doorway—never to return.

Hardly a minute had elapsed, and as yet unable to recover from their surprise, the panic-struck party remained standing, when a deep groan of mingled pain and horror, uttered with a fearful loudness, broke the spell. Actuated by one common impulse, the visitors rushed towards the door, and passing onward to the landing place, the mystery was solved at once.

Glittering in the splendid habiliments, which, in honour of the occasion, he had that night worn, but in many places stained and disfigured with the dark purple of his own blood, lay the inanimate form of all that remained of the once proud, haughty possessor of that wealth which had made him the envy of thousands. No one stood by—not a mark or footstep on the marble pavement left a print by which the murderer could be traced—none knew the menial through whose means the message had been carried, and he alone, save the assassin who could have solved the history of the fearful deed, lay motionless in death. Search, fruitless as indefatigable, was everywhere instituted, examinations made, persons seized; but, at the time, all and every measure proved abortive, and a thick veil hung impervious over the deed. The motive alone by which the act was perpetrated was manifest, for on the bosom of the corpse, secured to the dagger which had deprived the victim of life, was affixed a paper bearing three words—“*Giberto and revenge!*” yet it was widely circulated, that Giberto had long since ceased to exist: friends or partizans he had none to espouse his cause, neither could it be conjectured how the crime was so daringly, yet so secretly accomplished without detection. For the present, however, so it was; and although sin like that can seldom escape punishment, even in this world, it seemed as though, in the present case, retribution could result but by miracle alone.

Truly is it said, “the ways of God are inscrutable;”

and well was it exemplified in this case, and, moreover, brought to pass through the instrumentality of the actual perpetrator of the deed, who, lured by the temptation of reward proffered for discovering the offender, a despised outcast of society stepped forth, and voluntarily engaged to find a clue towards the so much wished for discovery, provided he was rewarded by the possession of the princely sum extended as a bait. The bargain was instantly struck, and the despicable miscreant announced himself the actual assassin; but at the instigation of his employer, Giberto, who, the better to effect his object without a chance of failure, had, for months past, been secreted in Malaga, with but one sole object—seeking opportunity for the gratification of his vengeance.

Thus, then, it was evident, that the various tales circulated of his death, were but fabrications; and eventual inquiry elicited that the more circumstantial statements of his decease originated with himself.

Measures were speedily adopted for securing the culprit, who, as yet, lingered round the scene of his former happiness and present guilt; and, ere many hours had elapsed, Giberto and the hired bravo were securely lodged within the dungeons of the Fort.

Now it was, that, from all sides sprung up remarks and recollections of circumstances that, for many a long day, had been buried in oblivion.

Again the whole story of Giberto's misplaced attachment was brought to light, and exaggerations innumerable were promulgated, while his supposed crimes were discussed with an avidity well worthy of a better cause.

Neither did the character of the helpless and innocent cause of so much mischief escape unassailed, nor were there wanting persons ready to affirm that, from the first intimation of her lover's attachment, she had manifested every possible encouragement, while others, even more wicked than the rest, quoted her agitation on the night of the murder, as convincing evidence of

her having been accessory to the deed ; these persons, forgetting that on the dreadful occasion, they themselves, and all present, admitted the painful feeling under which they laboured, when Don Triarto so suddenly, and at so unexampled a moment, left the room.

Such were the idle clamours which engaged the minds of the inhabitants ; and at length, overwhelmed with the repeated suspicions of the many, though still without the slightest proof of guilt, the beautiful widow was cast into prison, there to await the award which an investigation of the charge might call for.

It were hard to tell how the mind of Adelaida bore up against the accumulation of horrors, which, apparently, would never cease ; but the very consciousness of innocence has frequently afforded more support in the hour of affliction, even to the weak fragile form of a timid woman, than may be shewn in the boastful carriage of the stronger and more powerful sex, when confronted with equal peril.

Preparations for the examination were soon completed, and the three together stood in the presence of the judges, on whose decision rested their release from prison, or whose word might lead them forth to meet a painful and ignominious end.

All Malaga was conversant with the story of Giberto's early life ; his various accomplishments, his many virtues, and the readiness with which he gained the good will of those who knew him, was a theme familiar to their ears ; yet these and other favorable impressions, which, in spite of prejudice, yet clung to their minds, were quickly superseded by the remembrance of the manifold atrocities which had been laid to his charge ; and few, among those who formerly called themselves his most familiar friends, could have identified the mutilated being then under examination for his life, with him whom they had previously courted in days long passed by. The chief, and indeed only evidence against him was in the assertions of the assassin ; but so minutely did the wretch detail the craft and cunning with which the plot had been laid and carried into execution, and so

satisfactorily did he explain the mode in which each moment had been occupied by Giberto, since his reaching Malaga, that not a doubt existed on the mind of any then present, but that the accomplishment of the foul deed for which the prisoner was about to suffer, had been for a long period the sole and all-engrossing aim of his existence.

In extenuation, question, or defence, Giberto uttered not a word; an astonished look of mingled pity and contempt curled his lip, when first confronted with his accuser; but from the moment he entered, until quitting that tribunal a doomed man, neither by word or sign could the feelings that agitated his bosom have been judged; and although standing within a few paces of her whose almost angelic beauty had caused such abject misery and ruin, not for one instant did he raise his eyes toward those features, to gaze on which he once considered as the greatest blessing life could offer.

Had the warm nature of his being changed? did he now look with horror on the innocent cause of all his wretchedness? or was he fearful, by again turning towards the object of his early love, the apparent indifference which he assumed to bear him through the scene then acting, might deprive him of that firmness which he so much needed? What his motive was, God alone knows; but with an apparent calmness throughout the trial, and equally unmoved at its conclusion, he heard that sentence pronounced, which, in one short hour, would cease to number him among men.

Prejudiced as was the community at large against the miserable woman, and loud as were the brutal howlings of the mob, demanding she should share the fate of Giberto; yet the total absence of even a shadow of suspicion, that the unhappy lady could have possessed a knowledge of the intended murder, compelled the judges to pronounce her acquitted of the crime.

For months succeeding that agonizing hour when Adelaida beheld the early companion of her childhood led forth to execution, heaven mercifully decreed her an oblivion of all earthly

ills—neither was it until a short time previous to the evening we saw her kneeling in the church of San Juan, that the persecuted being regained her reason.

Slowly, and perhaps unwillingly, she recovered from her illness, and finally awoke to consciousness to find herself possessed of the large fortune bequeathed by her murdered husband; but of what avail was wealth to her? With whom could she partake the blessings thus offered? her father had preceded her to the tomb, and he in whose presence, perhaps, even poverty would have been a blessing, slept the last long sleep in a dishonoured grave. From that period her immense riches, and her time, were devoted towards alleviating distress, and supplicating mercy from the Deity, in behalf of those whom misery brought her acquainted with. /

From a sentiment of hatred, the vulgar rabble viewed her rather with a feeling of awe than of detestation, and hence arose the agitation of Matéo, when he strove to withdraw our party from the church.

No sooner had the fiat issued which was to reckon Giberto with the dead, than the callous ruffian, who for a heap of paltry dross bartered the life of his companion, with a brutal effrontery almost beyond the scope of human wickedness, insolently demanded the reward.

With a scowling visage, well-betokening some deeply hidden meaning, the officer appealed to commanded the money instantly to be paid, and as the delighted wretch clutched with his greedy hands the glittering price of blood, the dread sentence of death again rung on his ear, and in *this* instance pronounced his own irrevocable doom.

To dwell on the mental sufferings of the then abject traitor, would be but to inflict pain on all who detest viewing human nature in her most degrading garb; nor would a prolonged account of the execution, which took place in the presence of hundreds, gratify those who having waded through the history of Giberto's persecution and insane passion, may not perchance

withhold their pity at his untimely fate, though execrating the cold-bloodiness of his crime.

Arrived at the spot destined to witness his last struggles, he begged earnestly his eyes might not be blindfolded—a request, however, seldom or never complied with ; and raising his fine figure to its extreme height, while his companion lay writhing on the earth, amid his dearly purchased treasures, Giberto gave the signal to fire, and the next instant the bodies lay side by side, unconscious of this world for ever.

In the left side of Giberto's vest a small packet was discovered, sewn within the lining, which, when examined, proved to contain nothing but the blood-stained fragments of *a Broken Fan*.

#### CRITICISMS.

"A melancholy story, truly, and certes one not much to my fancy," observed Lord Ashdale, "for, as I observed regarding the legend related of the Convent de Santa Inez, and I now repeat it, assuredly we have a sufficiency of evils at home to make us sorrowful, without travelling this distance in quest of lacrymose recitals."

"Nay, but Ashdale," interposed Colonel Offersley, "you should bear in mind the story to which we but recently paid attention is true in all its details."

"And was not the nun's account of the founder of the convent at Seville equally so?" earnestly enquired Lady Blanche.

"Undoubtedly," was the Colonel's reply; "but I submit for the decision of the ladies, whether a greater interest is not necessarily created in the recounting of a narrative when one of the principal persons therein recorded is brought to notice in propria persona, than if the nearest approach to an interview is obtained by creating an imaginary being, fashioned according to the description handed down through generations by ancient chroniclers?"

"I by no means dispute that," replied Lord Ashdale, "nevertheless, I am free to acknowledge how impossible I find it to derive pleasure from attempts at making myself sorrowful. Now," he continued, laughing, "there's our friend Offersley at this very moment would gladly join the fair penitent we beheld at San Juan's, and shed tears in participation of her many griefs, in preference to associating with the most light-hearted party that could by possibility be collected together."

"Nay, nay," exclaimed Lady Mary, "you must not be so

severe on Colonel Offersley. For my part," she added, gaily, "no knight should ever wear scarf of mine who preferred dancing in a ball-room, to succouring a damsel in distress."

"Why, you're becoming romantically eloquent, Lady Mary," said his Excellency, who, during the short conversation, had hitherto remained silent; "for my part, I am well convinced that each and all of us would willingly exert ourselves in behalf of the lady we this morning encountered, were it possible that by so doing any advantage could thereby accrue in her favour: but of what avail would our poor services be in such a case? Moreover, an intrusion on her privacy by strangers might readily, and with good grounds, be misconstrued into rudeness, which is the last thing any of us would desire."

In that view of the case, however, the ladies did not by any means appear disposed to acquiesce; and had it been feasible for them to have followed the bent of their own inclinations, I doubt not but they would have sallied forth on the instant, in quest of the much-persecuted heroine, prior to taking into consideration what description of assistance they were about to proffer, as well as the extent of their ability to do good. This anxiety on the part of the fair travellers was, I fear, attributed by Lord Ashdale to a feeling approximating towards curiosity: but I, for one, am fully persuaded it had its origin in a better and far more generous motive.

And who can blame the kindly impulse which, responding to a detail of suffering, readily casts aside the cold, calculating axioms of society, and nobly dares public opinion in effecting what probably may prove beneficial to the distressed

Who would stigmatize the inexpressible impulse leading to so meritorious a consummation? And happy is it for the rougher and less polished portion of society, that the paramount influence of women is so frequently called into action, when our more hardened natures would have carelessly passed by objects worthy of compassion, without comment or regard.

But, as in the case in point, the ability to confer benefits by

the ladies being circumscribed, no attempt at a Quixotic expedition was further mooted.

"Did you observe," asked Mr. Fitslay, addressing Lady Blanche, "the almost awful calmness in the expression of the handsome Spaniard's countenance? and when having risen from her kneeling position, she glided noiselessly across the marble pavement, as though totally dissimilar from the walk of an inhabitant of this earth?"

"Very true," replied the beautiful girl addressed; "there certainly was something indescribably fearful, I may say almost approaching the supernatural, in the utter silence with which her feet touched the ground."

"Why, your fertile imaginations will convert poor Adelaida de Triarto into a downright ghost soon, Lady Blanche!" exclaimed Lord Ashdale, much amused at the attributes rapidly accumulating for the benefit of the recluse: "but, to speak seriously, I must myself acknowledge, she did look something like a spectre, if her colourless features may be taken as a criterion."

"Did you ever see one?" asked his Excellency, in a tone of voice which instantly drew the attention of the whole party upon him; "I ask," he continued, after waiting some seconds for a reply, "did any person present ever come in contact with a spectre?"

"Oh no, I hope not," exclaimed Lady Mary. "But, really, my dear Marquis, you look so serious, you quite frightened me."

"And actually made me start," added Lady Blanche; "but why does your Excellency ask so singular a question?"

"Simply in expectation of receiving an answer to my query, fair ladies," answered the chief. "What I advanced was sufficiently plain to be comprehended by every one; I was anxious to elicit whether any of the present party had, at any time, been brought in contact with a spectre, apparition, or ghost, or by

whatever varying denomination you choose to class the denizens of another world?"

"Good gracious, no, I hope not!" exclaimed Lady Mary. "I'm certain *I* should never recover so fearful a *rencontre*—the very idea is sufficient to kill one."

"For my part," observed Lord Ashdale, incredulously, "I confess I should extremely like to be honoured by an interview with one of those unsubstantial wanderers; but it is useless to hope for such a meeting, since every one derides the possibility of ephemeral visitors appearing."

"Not *every* body," remarked his Excellency, gravely.

"But," inquired Mr. Fitzlay, "is your lordship now speaking philosophically, or merely ambiguously alluding to a subject on which so vast a contrariety of opinion exists?"

"Nothing can be further from my intention, than to harbour a wish to render still more obscure that which is already sufficiently mysterious, even were it in my power to do so," replied his Excellency; "indeed, I frankly acknowledge, I am somewhat more than sceptical on the point myself; nay, I may likewise affirm, that I am far from convinced, in my own mind, that apparitions, or by whatever name you please to designate those unsubstantial terrors, do not occasionally make their appearance to mortal vision."

"Why, you're enough to terrify any one, Marquis," exclaimed Lady Mary.

"You cannot mean to aver, that the figure we saw in the church this forenoon was an apparition?" inquired Lord Ashdale, in considerable astonishment.

"No, not exactly that," answered his Excellency, smiling; "I merely intended to express my belief, that some of the marvellous anecdotes which occasionally reach us, in confirmation of the unaccountable appearance of phantoms, should not be received with the averred discredit which generally falls to their lot, though, probably, many of those who most loudly declaim against the possibility of an unembodied spirit appear—

ing upon earth in a tangible form, would be the least pleased, if subjected to such an encounter."

"May I inquire," asked Colonel Offersley, in some anxiety, "if your Excellency was ever exposed to such an ordeal?"

"Not in my own person, certainly not," replied the Marquis; "but that a near relation of mine was haunted by an unearthly visitor, who foretold his future fate, I implicitly believe."

"How very horrible!" exclaimed both the ladies together. "What was the result?" inquired Lady Blanche, with much interest.

"Nay," responded the Marquis, smiling, "our fair friends would have me recount the result, before they are made acquainted with the cause."

"Oh then, pray *do* relate the story," interposed Lady Mary.

"By all means!" exclaimed the gentlemen: "Particularly if it be a good ghost-story," chimed in Lord Ashdale, "for in those laughable recitals, there's a chance of being amused, and a certainty of the narration entailing no disagreeable after-recollections, knowing, as every body does, that goblin-anecdotes are purely fictitious."

"I am well aware," answered the Marquis, "that, in the opinion of many, that, which *I* firmly believe, was no optical delusion, will be considered as originating in a distempered fancy, or the morbid imagination of a too sensitive mind, while, by some, it will be attributed to a disordered intellect, acting on a frame, greatly enfeebled through recent and acute suffering."

"With such as may incline towards any of these conclusions, it is not for me to enter into controversy, since it were as unjust as futile, to demand credence for assertions, possessing nothing more substantial than repetition, as vouchers for their truth. Others there are also, who, deeply immersed in the matter-of-fact occupations of the world, regard, with feelings approximating to contempt, the detail of occurrences, which, soaring beyond their intellectual sphere, are rejected as the vain chimera

of an unsettled brain, or unhesitatingly denounced as the fanatical and unconnected ravings of a madman."

"Nay," replied Lord Ashdale, "if your observations are pointed at me, as a reprimand for my disbelief, I, by no means, uphold myself as one incapable of changing my opinion, and if any thing could shake my incredulity as to the presence on earth of supernatural beings, your Excellency's assertion, that you yourself place credence in at least, one story to that effect, would go far towards making me a convert; yet I imagine I shall be amply supported, when I aver, that very few would admit, as much as your Lordship has just done, touching your belief in ghosts."

"Doubtless," replied his Excellency; "but from those, and such as those, I look for nothing, beyond the faint smile of incredulity, or the more irritating gesture of compassion. To attempt to lead *them* into a reciprocity of feeling with myself, were indeed a fruitless task; for, strong in the armour of their own wisdom, they mercilessly announce as ephemeral, what I look upon as substantial truth. Let them pause ere they proclaim their unbelief, for a period may yet arrive, when, subjected to the same ordeal, which I now purpose to relate, their scepticisms may be cast down, and their opinions undergo a revulsion fixed as sudden."

In so solemn and earnest a tone of voice did the Marquis address the circle, that the attention of every one was rapidly attracted to the speaker, who, at the earnest solicitation of each individual, consented to relate the tale, which was to cure Lord Ashdale of his obstinate adherence to the impossibility of enjoying ghostly conversations—terrify the ladies for days to come—afford an inextricable web of difficulties for Colonel Offersley's solution—and furnish Mr. Fitzlay and myself with ample meditation on facts, wholly irreconcilable with the suggestions of common sense.

Before commencing the story, his Excellency premised that the circumstances he was about to divulge, occurred to a near

relative of his own, at a time when he was slowly recovering from wounds received at Waterloo, and which had detained him at Brussels some months.

"As my relative recapitulated to me his astounding tale," said the Marquis, "so will I endeavour to repeat, in the first person, as far as possible, word for word, as he slowly, and with evidently painful reluctance, detailed the story of his griefs. What impression it may leave on the minds of my friends here present, of course I cannot foretel; but, for my own part, I attach immutable faith to my friend having witnessed the occurrences I allude to. Why those circumstances took place, and for what special cause he was brought into contact with the mysterious being, those who listen to the tale are as competent to decide on as myself. Had the but-too-well-remembered interview owed its existence to a dream, or from any cause save an actual and tangible presence, no reason could possibly exist for the overwhelming and dreadful forebodings ever present to his thoughts. Surely so powerful an influence over otherwise a strong mind, could not have been achieved through the creation of fancy? Impossible! for notwithstanding years upon years have fled by since that memorable night, every circumstance, even to the most minute, is impressed on his memory as vividly as though the scene were but of yesterday's enacting."

Apologizing to the ladies for this lengthened preface, the Marquis, speaking in the first person, commenced his story.



# THE FIEND.

**Their fears are most, who know not what they fear.**

*King John.*



## THE FIEND.

It was towards the latter end of July, in the ever-memorable year 1815, and somewhat approaching to evening, that I found myself propped up with many cushions near an open window in one of the most conspicuous and agreeable parts of Brussels, inhaling the cool breeze, so refreshing after the close atmosphere of a sultry summer day. Crowds of well-dressed persons thronged the streets, and the sweet tone of woman's laughter, mingling with the dulcet notes of music, added no trifling interest to the scene. The dark shadows creeping across my solitary chamber were gradually increasing as the night wore on, and the sparkling brilliancy of innumerable lamps starting into light from all quarters of the city, made the interior of the apartment appear more dismally sombre from the contrast without.

I was alone, and in the full enjoyment of one of those indistinct yet soothing reveries, which, after a protracted and severe illness, cheers the enfeebled mind of the languid sufferer, instilling into his yet dreamy and half-recovered recollection, the many blessings the world he had so nearly quitted yet held forth for his gratification and delight.

The cause of my imprisonment was a leaden bullet, which, through the instrumentality of a French grenadier, was transferred from his musket to my frame. To remove the disagreeable guest the surgeons forthwith set to work with all imaginabl

diligence, cutting and probing in every direction ; and so zealously did they prosecute their labours, that had they continued their laudable occupation much longer, I am confident they would have cut me in two.

Things were in this state, when my servant, sensible that the severe treatment would speedily afford them opportunity of a more perfect examination of my body, without the slightest inconvenience to myself, wisely hinted at the possibility of the ball having traversed the skin, and taken its departure by the identical aperture where it entered.

This was certainly throwing a new light on the matter, but as the doctors could not, by the most ingenious torture, discover the object sought, they readily concurred in the view taken by my domestic, and again turned to their labours, but in this instance with the praiseworthy intention of healing the wounds and gashes which they had so liberally inflicted.

From the moment of release from the surgeon's knife, I began to improve rapidly, both in health and spirits, and on the evening mentioned, I felt so much better as to insist on my servant quitting me for a time, to enjoy a release from the irksomeness of confinement which he had voluntarily undergone since I received my wound.

Propped up in an easy chair, I gazed listlessly on the crowd below ; the promenade was covered with a dense mass of people ; the indistinct hum of thousands rose on the still air, and leaning back on the cushions placed for my support, I gave way to all those exuberant, though ideal anticipations of the future, which in the glad days of youth are so readily summoned, for no other purpose it would seem, than for a maturer age to crumble and demolish.

Weak, attenuated, and helpless as I was, I cannot call to mind moments of more unalloyed pleasure, than glided on by that old window, in my apartment at Brussels.

True it is my eyes rested on the motley group beneath, my ears drank in the honied sounds of mirth, which on all sides

broke the stillness of the night, and I felt grateful, truly grateful, for the refreshing breeze that fanned my pale and throbbing temples. Yet my thoughts were far, far away.

In imagination I was once more within the walls of that venerable building where first I saw the light. The moment I had so long yearned for, the wished-for hour of return to my beloved home, had arrived. I felt the affectionate pressure of my father's grasp, as he stood upon the threshold of the well-remembered archway, and again bade me welcome to his roof. The features of the old domestics beamed with pleasure, as I returned their kindly greeting; the hall, with all its many trophies of sylvan warfare, the ancient portraits, seemingly gazing from their antique frames, rose vividly to view. The favoured dogs even, who in their pampered indulgence were wont to dispute the very fireside with their master, with many a rough caress and gambol of delight, sprung to greet my presence.

And was there not *one* more form, *one* other beaming countenance to complete the scene of happiness amid that beloved group? Was there not one gentle voice beside, to lisp, in all the sincerity of a pure and affectionate heart, a scarcely-audible thanksgiving for my safe return? But why harrow up my very soul with these too-maddening recollections? Where are now the silver hairs of my fond parent? where the various members of our once-happy circle? where may I now expect to find that more than angelic being, whose radiant beauty shed a halo of happiness around all who came within the influence of her power, and whose undeviating rectitude, and unobtrusive piety, caused her to be regarded more as an essence from a higher sphere, than as a being of this sinful and polluted world?

Where are they now? Let him who would have that question answered, turn towards that once-proud edifice, and view the moss-grown stones, shunned and neglected even by the houseless wanderer. The feathered choristers that were wont to cluster amid the foliage of the surrounding shrubberies, and

usher in the morn with their joyous hymns, have long since departed for other homes, and all around is silent as the tomb. Each sign of life has passed away from that unhallowed spot ; the very birds of darkness and ill-omen spread wide their slug-gish wings, and turn in terror from the accursed pile ; while the wind, as it shrilly whistles through the decaying remnant of the corridors, seems to bemoan the fate of those who once dwelt within the tottering and now-deserted walls.

I was aroused from such and similiar reveries, by hearing my name several times repeated from the street, and on leaning over the balustrade to ascertain who my acquaintance might be, I observed a figure gazing upwards, as if in expectation of an answer to his summons.

On witnessing the desired effect, the object slightly waved his hand in recognition, and, having crossed the portal, immediately ascended the stairs. In a few seconds a low knock at the chamber door intimated the arrival of my guest, when, without waiting for permission, he slowly walked into the room.

I have before said the apartment was dark, and to me it has ever since appeared an unfathomable mystery by what means I was enabled to scan the features of my visitor, in the shadow of that sombre room, ay, and with as much accuracy as though our meeting had taken place under the bright canopy of heaven at noon-day. Yet at that moment the incongruity of the clear-ness, with which I noted every lineament of the stranger's form, surrounded as we were by profound obscurity, never for an instant occupied my mind.

I must, however, acknowledge that the presence of my visitor created a very different sensation from what might have been anticipated by the appearance of a casual acquaintance. I know not why, yet a predominant feeling, closely tantamount to awe, superseded my previous cogitations, and, as I kept my eyes riveted, as by enchantment, on the singular features before me, I vainly strove to shake off the thick coming fancies rapidly obscuring my brain. Yet there was nothing actually repugnant





in the outward appearance of the new comer; nevertheless, the sensations which enthralled me could in no degree be assimilated to anything I had previously encountered. I felt a dull weight of oppression at my breast, as if my breathing was arrested in its course—a cold moisture suffused my limbs and forehead, and though I would have tendered anything in my possession to be rid of the incubus which weighed me down, I could not have permitted the figure to depart without explanation for worlds.

The garb in which the cause of my agitation was arrayed, courted observation neither for its simplicity nor richness, and if anything appertaining to the costume was calculated to attract the eye, it might have arisen from the somewhat antique formation of the style; still there was nothing approaching to ridicule in the dress, and had that alone formed the difference from others, the wearer might have wandered unnoted and unquestioned by any.

But such was not the case with his features, for whoever once fixed his eyes on the countenance then before me, though he should exist until the end of time, never could the impression be erased. The eyes were black and piercing, yet, ever and anon, from underneath the arched and thickly shaded brows, glared forth a look which few could meet, and none dare return. The nose was aquiline and well-formed, but, as the sardonic curl of the upper lip broke through the contour of the lower part of the face, it imparted an expression to the whole, such as no other mortal man, I trust, has ever yet been cursed by gazing at.

The very symmetry of his features, coupled with the evil passions betrayed, only added to the fiendish stamp imprinted on the visage; and although when placed before me, the lineaments of this too-expressive countenance were tutored into what might have been intended as an indication of mildness and amenity, it would have been impossible for any lengthened period to face the appalling vision.

"You did not expect me this evening," commenced the

stranger, in a gentle tone of voice, strongly in contrast with his forbidding aspect: "I think I am right in the supposition that my presence at this hour was unlooked for?" and without pausing for reply, he drew a chair towards him, and placed himself at the opposite side of the window.

"Delightful situation!" continued the unknown, wholly regardless of my silence; "but your protracted imprisonment is sufficient to tinge the fairest view with the deteriorating shade of sameness. Am I not right?" he added, gazing abstractedly on the street, with the perfect nonchalance of an old friend, "am I not right?"

"In so far, certainly, that I see nothing exhilarating in a sick chamber," I replied, in some measure recovering my mental energies, which had been woefully unstrung by his entrance.

"True, most true," was the answer, "not the most agreeable position for a young man, certainly; but affording excellent opportunity for retrospection of bygone deeds, and determinations of amendment for the future," and as he uttered the last sentence, the diabolical sneer passed across his features, as in derision at his words.

"Now, were I permitted to hazard a surmise," he continued, "I should say that in your instance the opportunity has not been neglected, and possibly, not content with laying in a goodly store of unexceptionable resolutions, you have thought fit to reward your resolve with anticipations of happiness, as a fair equivalent for your purposed firmness. I'm not far wrong in my conjecture, I imagine?" added this extraordinary being, disposing his limbs in a more comfortable position on his chair. "To *me* you can speak without reserve on this or any other subject, we being anything but strangers to each other, as you well know."

"Then, indeed," replied I, not a little astonished at the cool tone in which so circumstantially was detailed the very subject of my recent thoughts—"indeed the acquaintance must be wholly on your side, since I have not the most distant recollec-

## THE FIEND.

tion of having seen you till now, neither know I to what I may attribute the present honour."

"Oh! as for the *honour*," answered the unknown, laughing, "of that we will discourse hereafter; but regarding our acquaintance, whatever may be the errors of your memory, mine is somewhat tenacious, and, though probably unknown to you personally, it by no means follows you are a stranger to *me*: far otherwise, I assure you—but enough of this; and now say whether my conjecture was correct or not?"

"And if it were correct," I replied quickly, "of what import could my ideas be to a person with whom I am totally unacquainted?"

"But who is well acquainted with you, nevertheless," interrupted the stranger.

"Be that as it may," I rejoined, somewhat nettled at the pertinacity with which he asserted a fellowship, which I would have staked my existence never had occurred—"be that as it may, I cannot acknowledge the right you appear to assert in catechising my very thoughts."

"And yet," answered the other, in no degree ruffled, "it is possible I could point out some more profitable mode of occupying time, than in fanning unsubstantial chimeras, which never *will* and never *can* be realised."

By this time, the awe in which I first held my companion, was dwindling rapidly away, and an ardent desire to dive into the object of his visit usurped its place, and resolved, if possible, to fathom the object of the intrusion, I boldly challenged him to explain.

"What is it you are so anxious to arrive at?" he replied; adding, as if in mockery, "surely it is time sufficient to be made miserable, when the cause of unavailing sorrow is brought to light, without seeking to embitter present moments, by drawing aside the veil that shrouds the future? But be it as you list; you, and you alone, can become the sufferer; and if still resolved to pry into what *must* happen, blame but yourself for the

result, since for me——” and breaking into a tone of mingled mirth and irony, he left the sentence unfinished, and immediately averred his readiness to reply to whatever questions I might propound.

“If such then *be* your power,” I resumed, scarcely aware what faith to affix to his assertion——“if, indeed, such power has been granted, tell me the thread of those thoughts which, on your entrance, engaged my mind?”

“At that time,” readily answered my companion, without a particle of hesitation in his manner——“at that time you were dwelling, in imagination, on the felicity your return home might naturally be expected to diffuse among your friends; you thought of the proud joy with which your father would clasp you in his arms, and you pondered over the anticipation of long years of unalloyed happiness to be passed with one, who, although not so near akin as others, is yet dearer to you than all the world besides. Am I not right there?”

“In the name of Heaven,” I exclaimed, “by what witchery can you have known this? No one have I seen, for a full hour, previous to your appearing, and to none, therefore, could my thoughts be openly revealed.”

“Perhaps not,” drily remarked my extraordinary visitor; “yet you perceive *you* are not the sole possessor of the secret. But come, let us turn to a more important matter, since it was not to repeat the thoughts and occurrences which have passed, that I am now here, but rather for the more useful purpose of revealing that which must hereafter happen.”

“Speak on!” I exclaimed, greatly excited; “for surely he who can tear the most secret thoughts from the bosom of another, may readily be empowered to communicate what no living man can aspire to.”

“Unquestionably, if such in reality be your wish,” was the ready and unruffled answer. “Listen,” he added, in a slow and solemn tone of voice, which made the very blood curdle in my veins; “listen, and ponder well upon my words; for, as sure a

that to-morrow's sun will in a few brief hours drive away the darkness of this night, so surely shall my words prove true. I warn you, that of all your dreams of happiness upon earth—of all the hopes you have so sedulously built—of all the pleasures you look forward to possessing, as next to certain—not one of those beatifical anticipations, which so long and so fondly you have cherished in the innermost recesses of your heart—not one of those ecstatic dreams of human joy *shall ever come to pass.*

“The parent you have too prematurely pictured as passing through a good old age, cheered by the love of those around him, shall soon be regardless of your voice; the young, the good, the beautiful being, whose affection you fondly and with justice imagine is your own—that gentle creature whom you love with all the passionate idolatry of youth—never, never shall be yours; the very dwelling of your forefathers shall crumble into ashes in your sight; wealth, rank, and honour, shall be showered on your head, when those who would have gladdened and rejoiced in your prosperity shall be no more; and *that*, moreover, when neither the inclination nor the power to benefit from worldly advantages remains at your disposal. Uncared for and alone, the residue of your dreary pilgrimage shall be dragged out in that spot which must ever bring the recollection of your miseries to your mind; and when at length death comes to rid you of an existence almost too burdensome to support, you shall ——”

“Speak on!” I exclaimed, half frantic at the picture the demon had called up; “speak, I implore you. Oh, let me hear the worst—let me hear all!” and attempting to rise, I should have fallen to the ground, had not my servant, who at that instant entered the room with lights, caught me in his arms.

With eye-balls nearly starting from their sockets, I gazed upon the spot where, but an instant since, I had seen the figure as perfectly as I now behold the persons I am addressing; but my eyes fell on vacancy alone; the chair stood exactly as *he* had placed it, but the mysterious occupier was no longer there.

the seat from whence the foul prophecy had been poured forth was untenanted; and nothing remained to bear witness to the visit of the stranger, save his ill-omened forebodings, which were as indelibly stamped on my recollection, as if written in letters of blood. No one save myself had seen his entrance into the room—so none had witnessed his departure. The porter at the gate denied all knowledge of his egress; and from that moment until now every trace of my persecutor has been lost.

As might have been expected, the violent paroxysm into which I was thrown, produced a relapse of my illness; my life, for a long period, was despaired of, but when at length I woke once more to consciousness, my beloved parent, and her who, to know was to adore, were anxiously watching by the couch of the convalescent sufferer.

If anything could have instilled life into my debilitated frame, the gentle care and ever-watchful zeal with which I was tended, must have accomplished that end; and when I was pronounced capable of removal, never shall I forget the joy with which I quitted that abode of misery and pain, and placed in the carriage with those I held so dear, once more turned towards my home.

Would that I could now close my narrative, and thus blot out for ever the recollection of the many succeeding years of misery which have so slowly rolled away. Willingly—most willingly would I acknowledge the supposition, that what had previously occurred, was but the creation of my own erratic fancy; but the result, the evidence of my own senses, closes the door against so hallowed an oblivion.

What was foretold on that most memorable night has long since been established in all its horrors, and, therefore, worse than fruitless must all attempt prove towards convincing me of the unreality of the Fiend. In each particular—even to the minutest shade—has the edict been fulfilled, and nothing now remains, save patiently to await the doom which the unfinished sentence of the demon seemed to threaten; but I am forestall-

ing events ; and, having undertaken the painful task, let me hurry over the fearful tragedy as briefly as I may.

It was a bright autumnal evening when we reached our anxiously-looked-for home ; the air was cold, yet exhilarating, and as the distant turrets of the mansion rose to my view, the feeling of happiness and content with which I gazed on each well-remembered spot, amply repaid me for the miseries I had endured.

So rapidly had we journeyed, that our arrival was somewhat unexpected, but in due time arrangements were effected for our comfort, and never did a happier trio assemble round a well-furnished board, than was portrayed on that occasion by my father, my adored Mary, and myself ; the hours—like all hours of supreme happiness—flew rapidly away, and it was late ere we separated for the night.

Such was the excited state of my feelings, caused, no doubt, by the stirring occurrences of the day, that on reaching my apartment, instead of immediately retiring to rest, I threw myself on a sofa by the fire, and mentally contrasted the happiness I was then partaking, with the wretchedness of the many preceding months. The baneful augury of the Brussels visitor rose not to my imagination, or if, indeed, a transient gleam of his foul prophecy forced its way, the impression was rapidly banished for some more pleasing subject.

How long I remained in that state I know not—it might have been hours, or it might not have exceeded one ; I heeded not the time, until at length, overcome with weariness and joy, I fell into a profound slumber. I dreamt—but what avails it to repeat the various strange forms and improbable incidents that flitted across my brain ? It was one of those indescribable sensations, mixed with causeless fear, which ending in the supposition of being hurled down a precipice, makes the victim start suddenly from his unrefreshing slumber, and gratefully acknowledge that reality claims no portion of the horrors.

It must have been late when I awoke ; the fire was all but

extinguished, a few embers only flickered in the grate. I felt chilled and weary, and rousing myself from my recumbent position, was preparing to undress, when a shriek—so clear, so thrilling, that to this hour it seems ringing through my brain—issued from a remote part of the building. Could it be fancy?—the impression of the dream I had just shaken off? or was it dread reality itself? Scarcely a second could have elapsed, when all doubt was effectually dispelled by another cry, if possible more terrible and dreadful than the first. Not a moment, therefore, was to be lost; I sprung to the door, and, heedless of the surrounding darkness, rushed along the corridor, in the direction whence I fancied the sounds to have proceeded.

In my way thither it was necessary to pass my father's room; the door was unclosed, and, regardless of some indistinct object in my path, my foot slipped, and I fell with violence to the ground. Acting under a common impulse, I stretched forth my arms to avert my fall, and encountering a soft, clammy substance, I regained my equilibrium, and pursued my way.

A dense smoke was now rising, in slow and circling eddies, from various parts of the house, the flames broke forth from innumerable quarters of the building at once, and, guided by the ruddy glare of the destructive element, I hurried along the winding passages which led towards my cousin's chamber.

At the very threshold of her room, with nothing save a loosely-wrapped shawl around her white nightdress, and extended at length upon the floor, lay the inanimate form of my beautiful, my betrothed Mary. Her face was pale as marble—her long dishevelled hair hung dabbling in a pool of gore, while from underneath the light drapery of her dress, a dark sluggish stream coursed its serpentine way along the clear and polished marble.

Scarcely conscious of what I did, I stooped to raise the body in my arms, but instantly relaxed my hold with a yell of horror, as the head, falling backward with the motion, disclosed a deep purple gash in the swan-like neck of my angelic cousin, which nearly severed it from the trunk.

With indescribable agony I pressed my hands upon my bursting temples, in hopes of shutting out the hideous spectacle from my sight; but they felt as if polluted with the hot stream; and holding my ensanguined fingers from my half-averted face, the crimson stain too plainly told what had been the obstacle encountered near my father's room.

Of what succeeded on that dreadful night, I cannot give account: to me, the day and darkness passed undivided—of time I took no note—days, hours, weeks, were all confused in one; but I can remember having heard voices, and sometimes I can call to mind forms and features flitting round the pallet where I laid, which seemed to mock me with their hideous jeers—but all was dreamy and indistinct. A dense vapour appeared, surrounding all occurrences, until *that* hour when I awoke to consciousness, and found myself manacled with chains—the inmate of a loathsome cell. Then came another long, long period, divided between darkness, oblivion, and pain. I knew I was still in being, yet totally unconscious of the end or aim of existence. My mind wandered through a chaos of unutterable imaginings, but nothing tarried long enough for my thoughts to dwell on.

I have since been told that occasionally I would call upon the name of my cousin with a frightful vehemence of impatience, and then, as if in childish mockery, would imitate the gibbering strains of a senseless idiot. I was mad; and when at length reason resumed her sway, and I became cognizant of what passed around, they told me to prepare for trial—trial for murder—the murder of my father, and that fair girl on whom I doted almost to insanity. I could have laughed in the faces of the besotted fools, who, in the impotence of their shallow wisdom, came to denounce as a murderer, *him* who would gladly have perilled life itself to preserve those now lost to him for ever. Accused of murder—and of having murdered *them*! It was too absurd; and yet the preparations all went on, till one cold, damp morning, when they took me from my cell, and led me to a place filled with hundreds of faces, glaring with intense

horror on the vile, polluted parricide. I know not what they did, for I was occupied in trying to recognise amid that sea of heads, those who had appeared to me in the long hours of desolation and loneliness which had so constantly been my companions. But I knew them not: all were strangers to my eyes; some there were who troubled me with questions; but I neither understood nor cared to ponder their meaning.

At length they took me back to my solitary cell, and then it was they told me I was mad. And was *that* all their vaunted wisdom could arrive at? Had they asked the maniac, he could have solved that question long ago; he well knew that he was *mad*—*mad* since the horrors of that foul, accursed night.

Years passed away, and when at length I regained my senses, it was but to learn I had been pronounced guilty of the double murder; but on the plea of fixed insanity, was doomed to imprisonment for life. Of my guilt none entertained the shadow of a doubt, until about five years since, when circumstances came to light which proved my innocence to the world. By confession of two felons, it appeared that, tempted by the reported quantity of plate and jewels kept in the house, and ignorant that the family and servants had returned, a daring plan was laid for robbing the premises, and to avert suspicion of their guilt, incendiarism was to be added to the crime. An escreteire, known as part of the furniture in my father's room, excited the cupidity of the wretches, and having entered what they supposed would prove an untenanted chamber, their faces were unhappily recognised, when, to avoid condemnation and punishment, murder was unhesitatingly committed. Disturbed by unusual sounds at that late hour, my ill-fated cousin came forth, probably under the impression that some of the family were ill, and thus attracting the notice of the ruffians, met her cruel and untimely end.

My innocence thus established, nothing was talked of but reparation, and entreaties for forgiveness poured in thickly upon me; but I was not mad then, so I requested as the only benefit they could confer, to set me free. What further repara-

tion needed I at their hands? Could *they* bring the dead again to life? Could *they* wash out the frightful occurrences of the last twenty years? No! What then were their shallow meaningless regrets to me? I turned from their offers of condolence with contempt. I spurned their slavish proffers of assistance with disgust.

Neither did I need their aid. True to the demon's words, rank, wealth, and honour, rapidly became mine by inheritance; but of what value were they then? Was *I* an object to court publicity and note? I regarded my possessions with detestation and loathing, and cursed the law that compelled me to carry my hated titles to the grave.

From the very spot where, now approaching towards half a century since, I beheld that awful visitor, I relate these facts. In this very chamber, so fraught with horrible and harrowing associations—but from which I cannot tear myself away—I now count the slow approach of each arriving hour. To me there is an attraction—painful it is true, yet no less powerful—that bids me cling to this building, as the last remaining link whereby I call to mind the beautiful features of my long-lost Mary. In this chamber was it, that her anxious care rekindled the almost-expiring flame of life in my worn and shattered frame; and on this very spot was I foretold my fearful destiny, which the intervening years have so awfully and fully accomplished.

\* \* \* \* \*

“With slight and unimportant variations,” continued His Excellency, “I have repeated verbatim the fearful story, as it was recorded by my relative. That the occurrences I have enumerated, regarding the murders and incendiarism, actually occurred, I can myself bear testimony. Further comment or observation of mine must be needless, and unlikely to bias the decision my listeners may have arrived at, as regards the actual presence of the Fiend, as just related.—Good night.”

## A DILEMMA.

I cannot vouch for the excellence, or otherwise, of my fellow-traveller's slumbers, after having listened to the Marquis's narrative; but, for my own part, I can bear testimony to having, in my own person, enjoyed a sound and uninterrupted repose, *malgré* the usual *concomitants* to a Spanish mattress. In sooth I was thoroughly tired, and having no baggage with me beyond what my horse carried, and *that* too saturated with rain during most part of the journey since leaving Malaga, I was anything but disposed to quarrel with my resting-place, so that a roof was overhead, and a blanket available to cover my shoulders.

As if the elements had conspired against us, the appearance of the following morning was well calculated to engender disappointment, and give notice of a continuance of heavy rain, which for the two previous days we had encountered, for, exactly similar as had been the case on the foregoing march, the sun kindly put forth his glorious rays, to cheer us on our road at early morn, but withdrew his genial influence ere we had proceeded half a league, and down came a fearful torrent of water, which continued, without intermission, throughout the whole day's journey.

Another edition of cold, darkness, and hunger, was by no means exhilarating in prospect; yet how could the threatened evil be averted? To attempt reaching Grenada ere nightfall, was, on all sides, acknowledged to be vain. To mend the matter likewise, both quadrupeds and muleteers evinced unmistakable demonstrations of a fixed determination to proceed no further, and, as their present disapprobation by much exceeded even their previous dissatisfaction, it was but too evident we

were wholly at their mercy ; and sooth to say, the men deserved but little blame at having jumped at such a resolve, since every effort made to urge their jaded beasts onwards, proved productive of considerable exertion at their expense, without the smallest benefit accruing to any of the party. A prolonged detention on the road being much more probable than a forward movement, a council of war was speedily summoned.

The night had by this time become perfectly dark ; the roads, broken by the incessant rains, were scarcely passable even by day ; the ladies were naturally dispirited and fatigued, and, to crown the whole, our guide, whose declarations had hitherto been most sanguine, now declared it was worse than madness to continue our route.

That *veto* issued, hopes of further progress were annihilated ; to remain where we were, was decidedly uninviting, if not impossible, and, accordingly, a retrograde movement was unavoidably agreed on, in hopes of regaining a small hamlet, called *El Hacha* which having passed through some two miles back, offered the only chance of accommodation for leagues around.

After much toil, and many doubts as to the practicability of our reaching the miserable shelter we were in quest of, we eventually gained the anxiously-sought hovel—for little better was the building wherein the choicest flowers in the bouquet of our aristocracy were destined to pass the night. As for sleep, or indeed repose of any description, it were incompatible with the appurtenances of the lodging, for the new comers had momentary proof afforded that their presence was not a matter of indifference to *all* living creatures.

Complex and manifold as our miseries were, starvation formed no item among our sorrows, for Monsieur Perrin, that most enlightened of *artistes*, who accompanied the expedition, taxed his abilities to the utmost, and not only succeeded in pandering to the sharpened appetite of his individual master, but also ameliorated the hunger endured by his other admirers.

Singular was it that the same promoter of gastronomy was, when in the service of Marshal Soult, compelled to halt, together with his general, in the very hamlet we then occupied, *but such in reality was the fact*. On the former occasion, the French commander lost two *aides-de-camp* by assassination, while the *restaurateur* escaped the knife of the murderers to attend to the ordinary wants of the hereditary enemies of his country, on the same identical spot, at an interval of many—many years.

The room, or more properly speaking, the barn, which the ladies honoured with their presence, possessed not the most remote appearance of anything approximating to comfort. The floor was a wet soft clay ; the walls old, broken, and disgustingly filthy ; fowls roosted wherever they could find space ; and the small fire which dimly burnt in one corner of the hut, sent up volumes of dense smoke to the ceiling, where, finding it impossible to escape, it descended struggling for egress through the low and narrow door way.

From the roof long strings of garlic and onions were suspended in anything but fantastic festoons, while grapes and melons in abundance lent their aid in diffusing a sickly perfume around. Beds there were none ; neither, had such necessary adjuncts towards rest existed, would any of the party have trusted to their downy influence.

Barren of all interesting objects as *El Hacha* appeared, there was a figure seated in the furthest corner of the hovel, who, rising at our entrance, betrayed by his soiled and saturated apparel, that he likewise sought shelter from the storm.

So engrossed were we in attending to the comforts of our fair companions, that at first the presence of the stranger passed unheeded ; but when at length every available disposition had been effected towards a semblance of accommodation, we could not fail in noticing the remarkable figure of the Spaniard. He was beyond the common height, and to a countenance extremely handsome was added that touching pensiveness, so irresistibly

attractive, and which, as a true indication of deep though silent grief, cannot fail in interesting the beholder.

In this man, the lineaments of his intellectual countenance were too deeply stamped with the insignia of long-borne anguish, to admit a doubt but that the cavalier formed one of many thousands on whom the blighting influence of dissension in their distracted country had not passed by unnoticed.

His manner towards ourselves was unobtrusively polite, and the alacrity with which the humble peasants flew in obedience to his bidding, proclaimed the possession of no small share of influence among those by whom we were surrounded. The orders which the stranger issued referred not to himself, while the many small alleviations to the discomforts endured by the weaker travellers, and which previously we had frequently asked for, were now ready tendered; and by this seasonable, though unexpected interference, our friends' position was somewhat improved. Common civility—were it nothing more—urged us to advance some few words of courtesy in return for the substantial benefits received; but all attempts at conversation proved abortive. Our remarks were listened and replied to with that easy air of seeming interest, which the well-bred gentleman can at all times summon to his aid. The attention of the stranger was visibly directed towards ameliorating the uncomfortable situation in which the fair strangers were placed, but beyond that, he appeared determined not to step.

Whether he understood the English language, or merely guessed at the meaning of the words unguardedly dropped by some of the party, I cannot say; but on an observation being made, the reverse of uncomplimentary to his noble carriage and graceful bearing, a slight smile stole across his features, more, it seemed to me, in scorn, than from a feeling of gratified vanity, and bowing slightly to the gentler portion of our party, he cast his huge *manta* across his arm, and instantly departed from the hut.

Then was conjecture busied with his name; the ladies, of

course, jumped to the conclusion that the handsome Spaniard must be a brigand in disguise, and, from his melancholy cast of countenance, of course, desperately in love with some beautiful senorita, who was yet unacquainted with her admirer's lawless mode of life; while the men, far less sentimental, gave it as their decided opinion, that he was some confounded rascal, sent to spy out the strength of the party, and probable amount of booty to be gained, should his companions deem it worth while to risk a chance shot or two, in hope of appropriating to themselves, what hitherto we had looked on as our own.

But, on this occasion, neither suppositions were correct; for the handsome, though unhappy-looking cavalier, we were afterwards informed, was no other than the celebrated Soto Mayor, the betrothed husband of the beautiful, though most unfortunate Mariana Pieneda, who, for a political offence, as it was then termed, suffered the *garrote* in 1832, at Granada, on *the very spot* where the inhabitants were, but a few years since, busied in erecting a monument in commemoration of her unshrinking magnanimity and courage; and this then was the identical hero whose fate was so closely woven with the tragic history referred to by Colonel Offersley before we quitted Gibraltar.

On the following day I stood upon the spot where that fair creature died: it is exactly in front of the theatre, and close to the hotel where the generality of English sojourn; and the site is the same where the statue in all probability is by this time placed.

A few days subsequent to our meeting Soto Mayor, as I was gazing on the work in progress, my fancy led me back to the awful hour, when, exposed to the insulting gaze of a brutal mob—a woman, ay, and one of Granada's choicest daughters—stood, calmly and unflinchingly resigned, to undergo the torments of a painful and dishonourable death, rather than utter the one brief word that would instantly have restored her to liberty and life. But no—that word, so anxiously sought for by the authorities,

would have consigned to capital punishment him, whom the devoted girl loved far better than herself; and therefore was it that, in preference to yielding up the knowledge so ardently pressed for, Mariana Pineda stood prepared to testify, by the sacrifice of her life, the fervour of woman's devotion when called into action by the wand of that powerful enchanter—love.

It is a sad tale, and many have been the versions circulated throughout Spain, and in the generality of narratives blame has been attached to her betrothed: yet, if the story as I heard it—and with every assertion and probable evidence of truth was it given—be correct, the reader will coincide with me in acquitting the wretched man, still living, of any participation in the crime, or as frequently was asserted, of shielding himself from danger, by the sacrifice of a young and beautiful creature, who loved him, as it proved, *even to the death*.



# THE EMBROIDERED BANNER.

Oh for a tongue to curse the slave  
Whose treason, like a deadly blight,  
Comes o'er the councils of the brave,  
And blasts them in their hour of might.

*Lallah Rookh.*



## THE EMBROIDERED BANNER.

Soto Mayor was—as is the case with most Spaniards of family—brought up in indolence and ease. His father, and again, his ancestors, had all been noble, and the blood that flowed through the veins of the young Spaniard claimed equality in purity with majesty itself. Unless called into action through some powerful excitement, the tenor of a Spaniard's life is generally passed in apathy and listlessness; he regards exertion as a nuisance, most religiously to be shunned, and thus, with music, dominoes, and cigars, he sings and smokes away the best hours of existence, allotted for other than those, to him, all-engrossing pursuits.

Like his countrymen, Soto Mayor would indisputably have squandered his life as ingloriously as the greatest admirer of indolence could desire, had it not been his lot to exist in times, when that most baneful of curses, civil war, stalked forth in all its blood-stained strength and power.

Divided, as Spain has been for years past, it would be difficult to surmise at what period a happier and more peaceful dynasty may rise up to bless that beautiful but unfortunate country; and at the period of which I now write, father was opposed to son, the nephew to the uncle, and scarcely a family could be named throughout Spain, that did not reckon in each opposing faction, friends, connections, and frequently near relatives themselves.

For a long and painful period, the attention of all Europe was directed to the fierce struggles, yet unsatisfactorily appeased, for intervention has hitherto proved unproductive of good, while the blood and treasure lavished on the cause by other powers, seemed to have produced no effect beyond that of fanning into a brighter flame the embers of civil discord, which it was hoped would speedily have been extinguished.

It is not in the gayer and more happy days of youth, when, influenced by a generous desire of siding with the oppressed, that we pause on the threshold of our career, to commune as to which may prove the more fitting path we should choose whereon to run our course; and to the unthinking, there is ever something so much more attractive in the very sound of "liberal views," that we need not wonder at the many advocates who readily embrace the plausible misnomer, in preference to working in the old and tried principles which, for ages past, have carried us so safely through danger.

In such a temperament was Soto Mayor, when the fast-increasing dissensions in his native land compelled all who could boast of nobility, or lay claim to notice, zealously to embrace one or other of those parties, whose factious proceedings were rapidly hurling down the few tottering supports by which the remaining advantages of their constitution were upheld. Yet all was done in perfect secrecy, for the government was not at that period so sunk in imbecility and supineness, but it retained sufficient strength to meet, with some show of defence at least, the machinations, when discovered, of their opponents.

That an extensive and powerful combination was on foot, having for its object the total overthrow of the reigning dynasty, was well known, but as its movements were cautiously hidden, and the mystery which enveloped the proceedings difficult to draw aside, so were the punishments consequent on detection severe and cruel in the extreme.

Political rancour, like religious fanaticism, when at its height, spares neither sex nor friends; and, in the civil war which then

desolated Spain, women—and women, moreover, of the highest birth, and blessed with beauty, virtue, and the manifold accomplishments which invest the female character with such paramount interest, even those bright ornaments of our existence, were frequently carried to the scaffold, there to appease, by the sacrifice of life, the ruffian clamour of the senseless mob.

In the year 1832, the annihilating demon stalked unchecked through all the southern provinces; and in the spring of the epoch was it, that on a soft and delicious eve Mariana Pineda wandered through those beautiful courts of the Alhambra, which, once seen, never by possibility can be forgotten.

The inquisitive, who care to peruse a full and comprehensive detail of all that appertains to the romance of that enchanting spot, should read the works of Washington Irving, written within the elaborately-decorated walls of that gorgeous palace, and those who would seek more solid information on all that treats of the history of Granada, in its palmy days, would do well to take into their notice the best, and by far the most interesting account that has ever issued from the press\*.

On a theme so alluring, I cannot tarry on my way; for were I to commence a description of the enamelled pavements, decorating the courts of the Alhambra, the delicately-carved roofs, supported by the fragile-looking fluted pillars, varied with the brightest colours, interspersed with gold; the arabesque figures, perfect as when first placed there by the conquering Moor; the soft murmur of the plashing fountains, and the delicious perfume exhaled from myriads of flowers, I should be unable to proceed with my tale; yet it is impossible to quit the subject without recalling the mixed feelings of admiration and awe experienced when gazing on those magnificent halls, now deserted, and silent as the tomb, while every embellishment around vividly recalls to mind the days when the most polished and gallant nation upon earth held there undisputed sway; the

\* Prescott's History of the Reign of Ferdinand and Isabella. London. Bentley. 1839.

gorgeous fabric still remains an unanswerable evidence of the refined taste and enlightened civilization, which once shone with such refulgent brightness around the ancestors of the now ignorant and bigoted Moor.

It was eve: Mariana stood by the fountain, in the beautiful Court of Lions, gazing on the gold and silver tenants of the marble vase, into which the crystal stream poured its refreshing shower; yet, though her eyes were fixed upon the water as it fell, the steady gaze with which her look dwelt on the objects before her, proclaimed how distant from the lovely spot were the thoughts then occupying her attention.

To describe the faultless form and features of that high-born Spanish girl were vain and futile, as it would be to picture what each person's ideal fancy may dwell on as perfection. Those whom we have heard relate the story of her melancholy fate, liken her to what they deem most faultless and good, and by the sequel of the melancholy narrative, it would appear that her devoted love and inexhaustible affection for him to whom her hand was plighted, fully equalled in strength the splendour of her beauty's blaze.

Poor Mariana! were your thoughts then leading you to the contemplation of what was decreed so soon should happen? or was your mind, till then untuned to sorrow, revelling in the anticipated possession of happiness, which it was ordained never should be yours?

Whatever the vision might have been that, for a time, held her senses in thrall, it was not of long duration, for suddenly regaining her self-possession, with a slight start, and half-stifled sigh, she instantly turned her brilliant eyes, half suffused with tears, towards the countenance of the person by her side. That companion was the son of her father's friend—the chosen play mate of her infant years—the adviser and protector of her childhood—and now, in the bright hour of her dawning womanhood, her ardent, enthusiastic lover—Soto Mayor himself.

Yet were they not alone; for apart, but not so far distant as

to lose each word of the passing conversation, stood a lady, young, handsome, and engaging; yet, ever and anon, as she bent her faultless figure, in the act of gathering a flower, to add to the bouquet carried in her hand, her searching eye glanced rapidly towards the lovers, with an expression by no means indicative of joy.

Elena de Santaguella was a near relation, and had for years been the chosen friend and companion of Mariana; yet while the very innermost thoughts of her unsuspecting cousin were readily laid bare for her scrutiny and comment, she was, in her own heart, cherishing in secret a sentiment, which was destined to overmaster reason, and supersede each better feeling, which should influence a woman's actions, and finally was it doomed to hurl destruction upon them all.

It was not by the beautiful Mariana alone that the young and graceful Soto Mayor was beloved, though the object then cherishing her unbounded passion cared little to disguise, when in his presence, what the real state of her feelings was; but so thoroughly engrossed was the Spaniard in contemplation of his adored mistress, that having found favour in his cousin's estimation, to the prejudice of his betrothed, never for an instant crossed his mind.

As for Mariana—innocent and unsuspecting—she viewed her young relative with affection and esteem, while in the frequent commendations passed on her lover, she found nothing but a desire to gratify, by such conversation, the natural inclination planted in our nature of listening to praises lavished on those we love.

From what I have written, let it not be supposed that the youthful mind of Elena de Santaguella had from infancy been a prey to fierce and unfeminine control. From the unamiable and revolting picture now portrayed, it would appear possible, that, notwithstanding the very few years she had numbered, there harboured in her breast the specious germs of treachery and deceit: and so it was; while, corrupt as we acknowledge the

heart must have become, ere it could willingly cherish so wild and ungovernable a passion as Elena gave way to, nevertheless the instances on record are manifold, and more especially in warmer latitudes than our own, when love, having once asserted his supremacy, retains the power he has gained, even though the possession be maintained at the expense of happiness, honour, and even life itself. In the instance before us, however severe the struggle may have been, ere the victim surrendered to the undisputed sway of so debasing a control, the complete expulsion of all rectitude from her bosom made room for the reception of a train of cunning and well-concealed fraud; and in brief time she taught herself to nourish a sentiment bordering on aversion towards that relative to whose fostering care she owed so much, and from whom she had ever experienced the greatest kindness and support.

When once an evil passion, instead of being crushed in the bud, and radically rooted from the mind, where it strives to make fast its poisonous fibres, is first tolerated, and finally cherished, even though it be in secret, it is surprising how speedily we become familiarized with what, but a short time previously, we would have shrunk from with unfeigned abhorrence and detestation; and thus was it with Elena; for at the period of introducing her to my readers, she had long ceased to regard her mad infatuation as treachery against the happiness of her friend and benefactress, but rather did she view the placid contentment of Mariana as an insult offered by a successful rival, and mentally she resolved, that Soto Mayor should never claim her lovely relative as his bride.

Such were the vindictive and selfish feelings reigning in the breast of this miserable woman at the time, when, ostensibly employed in gathering flowers, not a common expression or trivial action passed between the lovers, but it was well noted, and indeliably impressed on the tablets of *her* memory, who, of all others in the universe, the unsuspecting couple deemed certain they could count on as their friend.

"But why not, Mariana?" observed Soto Mayor, in reply to some remark his companion had just uttered; "why not?"

"For very many reasons, and certainly some among so large an assortment must be good," was the reply, half in jest, yet at the same time with considerable earnestness of manner.

"Nay, Mariana," interrupted her lover, "I do not for an instant doubt the solidity of your arguments; I only ask to share with yourself the knowledge you allude to; and since you are acquainted with causes to me unknown, why not grant my boon, for why should you withhold the relation of facts from *me*, who must necessarily feel most interested in the undertaking?"

"To conceal anything from you," instantly responded his affianced bride, "I trust will ever be foreign to my wish; but among other causes which would induce me to hope your request, trivial though it seems, may not be again urged, I only beg you to call to mind the awful consequences which inevitably *must* follow should detection come to pass: this, of itself, Soto, should be amply sufficient to induce you to dismiss the matter from your mind."

"But, wherefore *should* we be detected, Mariana?" immediately replied the other; "and, even were it possible to become known that such a banner was in my possession, they would not dare touch *you*; therefore is it, that again I say, why should you fear the result?"

"It is not for myself I tremble," mildly replied the noble-hearted girl; "but it is on your account, and on yours alone, that I cherish misgivings. Do we not daily—nay, almost hourly, witness scenes the most revolting, and are we not made constant listeners to tales of cruelties hitherto unknown? Are not our enemies ever ready to assail those even who are barely suspected, and where no proof exists of their enmity towards the government? We well know that a single hint dropped to the opposing party, or a vile anonymous denunciation, urged in an influential quarter, are amply sufficient to raise up unmitigating

persecution against those who think not similarly with themselves on these detested politics."

"True, Mariana," rejoined the young cavalier; "the existence of their unbounded cruelty, and most inhuman and unmanly persecutions, admits not of contradiction; but the term of their despotic rule is fast ebbing away; the hour of unprecedented cruelty is verging to a close, and in brief time a brighter day shall dawn on our misgoverned country; and when, as soon must be the case, the brave advocates for liberty and our rights shall simultaneously cast aside the veil which has hitherto shrouded their movements, what standard can we unfurl capable of inspiring the band of patriots with such devoted zeal in the good cause, as the bright banner of freedom, embroidered by the hands of one of the noblest, and by far the most beautiful and best of all Spain's bright-eyed daughters?"

"Nay, nay, Soto," smilingly replied Mariana; "your own partiality would needs make you imagine the banner you are so anxious to obtain would hold equal value in the opinion of others as with yourself; but," she continued, gently pressing the arm on which she rested, and gazing beseechingly on her companion's face, "but I implore you first consider what may be the consequences to yourself, should this insurrection, praiseworthy though it be, fail through superior strength and prowess of your foes, or from any of the innumerable causes which yet beset your path?"

"But Mariana," he exclaimed, "again and again have I endeavoured to convince you, that our undertaking *must* succeed!"

"And yet, dearest Soto," she added mildly, interrupting him, "and yet, notwithstanding all your arguments in favour of the cherished supposition, you have hitherto failed to assure me of such an anticipated result; and why should *you*, from among the many, step forward as the most prominent of the adverse faction, while others who have boasted the loudest, and professed most, now that the hour for action is at hand, claim not the position which by right is theirs, but willingly leave you to bear the

odium, punishment and disgrace, all of which must inevitably attend upon defeat? while in case of success, these very men will endeavour to deteriorate from the value of your services, and will unblushingly claim as their reward, that return from the hands of the nation, which, in common justice, should be bestowed as the result of your unwearied exertions."

"Mariana—Mariana," replied her companion, "let us not anticipate these melancholy and chimerical results; a brighter day has yet to come, and a new dynasty shall arise, and an incorruptible constitution shall be formed under shelter of the Embroidered Banner, presented by my beloved bride to those who struggle for their rights; and that circumstance alone will doubly nerve the arm of all who gather underneath its silken folds."

"But recollect, Soto," mournfully rejoined his attentive listener, "recollect, I beseech you, that the very persons against whom you would so readily draw the sword, are your own countrymen, and, in many instances, your acquaintances, even though you acknowledge them not as your friends."

"But are they not enemies to Spain?" energetically he exclaimed; "are they not opposed to the free constitution, which, by right of liberty, is ours?—are they not——"

"Indeed—indeed, Soto," exclaimed Mariana, interrupting the outburst of patriotic feeling in which he was about to indulge, "I cannot argue on that point as you can; nor, indeed, do I pretend for an instant, for how should I, to understand the deep schemes of policy in which you have latterly so deeply engaged? 'Tis true, I cannot speak on these matters, Soto, as you so readily explain them; but if I claim not a man's mind, at once to dive into the future, and readily draw conclusions as to coming events, from the occurrences daily passing around, at least I possess the keen perception of a woman, who intuitively can discern from whence danger to those she loves, may be apprehended; and this it is, my beloved Soto," murmured the affectionate girl, laying her small white hand upon his shoulder, while the unbidden tears ran silently down

her cheeks, "this it is, Soto, and this only, that instigates me so fervently to beseech you to withdraw, ere too late, from the dreadful cabal in which you are engaged. Oh! why—why," she continued, with more energy than she had hitherto displayed, "why should we risk the happiness yet within our reach, in hopes of grasping a doubtful addition to your honour, and one, which even if attained, never can be won, but by the sacrifice of perhaps thousands of your fellow-creatures?"

"But I have already gone too far," muttered the agitated patriot, while pressing the beautiful figure of his betrothed to his breast, "I have gone too far, my Mariana, to withdraw without disgrace and dishonour: not twelve hours have elapsed since I plighted my solemn oath before God, never to sit down in tranquillity and peace, until the reigning dynasty be overthrown, and our accursed oppressors levelled with the dust."

"And is it so in truth?" mournfully replied Mariana, her beautifully-chiselled features pale as the whitest marble; "and is it, in reality, as you have said?"

"As I hope we may meet hereafter in another world, never to part more," was the almost solemnly-uttered response.

"Then be it so!" calmly, and with an expression of true dignity, she exclaimed, after a moment's pause; "since the evil *must* be encountered, let us meet it boldly; what *you* risk, that will *I* dare. No more shall word of mine strive to turn you from that path, which, you say, never can be quitted but by loss of honour; from this hour I embrace your cause; your friends shall be my friends; and though the enterprise we engage in may heap destruction on our heads, the greatest satisfaction I can derive, is in knowing that, should you fall a prey in the undertaking, I shall not be separated from you even in death. But why look so sorrowful, Soto, now that the object you have so long sighed for is attained? The banner shall be quickly wrought, and the good taste of my pretty relative, so busily engaged amid yon parterre of flowers, I am confident will aid me in the task—will you not, Elena?"

"Aid you in what task?" inquired the lady addressed, moving towards her friends, as though unconscious of having heard a syllable of the preceding conversation; "in what am I to aid you, Mariana?"

"In the construction of a silken banner, Elena," somewhat hesitatingly answered her relative.

"For whom?—for what?" again inquired the perfidious ally.

"Oh! for Soto Mayor—in short, for the patriots!" was the hurried response, already deeply regretting she had made the request; "surely, you will not object to lend me your assistance, Elena, will you?"

"To embroider a banner—a banner for Soto Mayor and the rebels—oh, I shall be delighted!" and making a low obeisance, which it were difficult to say whether enacted in sport or derision, the sylph-like figure of Elena de Santaguella turned towards the gorgeously-decorated Hall of the Ambassadors, and her light footstep soon ceased to echo on the Mosaic floor.

Some weeks had elapsed subsequent to the conversation just detailed; but the conspiracy which Soto Mayor was expected to head, was not sufficiently matured to permit the actors in the intended tragedy openly to avow their disaffection; yet were the preparations progressing; and although nothing was publicly proclaimed, men stopped each other in the crowded streets, and by the anxiety evinced in the eager question, and cautious reply, it was plain to surmise some important occurrence was expected speedily to transpire.

All was doubt, suspicion, and alarm; for although every one was ready to prognosticate a general movement being close at hand, none were capable of discovering from whence it might be looked for to arise, nor on what quarter the blow might fall.

The theatres remained as usual, open; public amusement received no check from the authorities; laughter and n

resounded from the *patios* of Granada; and many plunged yet deeper amid the gaiety and revelry that offered, as though conscious they stood upon a mine, which at any moment might be sprung, and therefore resolved to enjoy, to the uttermost, whatever blessings life yet offered to their grasp.

Unconscious of expectancy of evil—in so far at least as the continuance of gaiety seemed to warrant—there were few persons, even amid the most boisterous in their mirth, who did not anxiously watch for some open symbol of revolt, which would at once enable them to decide in behalf of which party to raise their voices, since experience had long proved the fallacy of attempted neutrality, when a country rises in rebellion against a reigning power.

Soto Mayor, like many other active partizans on what was termed the patriotic side, had been some days absent from Granada, stimulating, with his utmost power, the excited feelings of the many, who, like himself had sworn to prosecute their struggle for liberty, even at the risk of captivity and death. But, in the smaller towns, as in Granada, much craft and circumspection were requisite to elude the vigilance of the authorities, ever on the alert to suspect and denounce supposed members of the opposing faction. To this end, disguise and dissimulation in all degrees were unhesitatingly had recourse to; and scarcely could Soto Mayor venture to repose beyond a few hours in the same spot, so narrowly were the actions of all suspected persons regarded and commented on.

This it was that precluded the possibility of any communication passing between the beautiful Mariana and himself; neither, indeed, would it have been deemed politic to have trusted their secret to paper, even had a mode presented itself by which an intercourse with his beloved mistress could have been kept up; added to which, both parties were well satisfied, that the contents of any document sent by them would speedily have been perused by whoever might chance to gain possession of the epistle.

Fully acquainted, therefore, with the impossibility of hearing from each other, prior to the anticipated happiness of their next meeting, and accustomed in those troublous days to experience the disappointment consequent on long protracted absence from those they loved, people ceased to marvel at the silence maintained by distant friends, nor looked they for communion with their relatives prior to their long-hoped-for appearance at their homes.

To Mariana de Pineda the hours naturally passed heavily on; nor was it probable her thoughts could be turned into any joyous channel, busied as her mind constantly was in endeavouring to anticipate the result of that revolt, which daily observation told her must be close at hand.

Since the departure of Soto Mayor from Granada, on the mission already referred to, the beautiful Mariana directed all the power of her needle, guided by her exquisite taste, in accomplishing the completion of the Embroidered Banner, which was to lead her lover's partizans to liberty and triumph. There were moments, and possibly many, when the affectionate girl pursued the unwelcome task with aversion and disgust. From the very first she had strenuously opposed the project, and every influence which her lively imagination could suggest, every innocent stratagem had been attempted, to wean her betrothed from the toils into which he so heedlessly rushed; but when he solemnly assured her, that to retire from the band he had voluntarily joined, would be tantamount to dishonour, his affianced bride never again returned to the subject in tones of disparagement, but rather exerted her utmost to instil those hopes into her lover's bosom which she vainly endeavoured to cherish in her own.

Yet there were periods when a horrible feeling, akin to consciousness of approaching anguish, flashed across her mind, prompting her to cast aside the silken emblem of rebellion, which it was now her constant occupation to labour at.

The Banner, under the hands of its fair mistress, was ap-

proaching completion, and with apparent willingness and alacrity the handsome Elena de Santaguella lent her aid towards perfecting the work, and so zealously did she appear to interest herself in every matter connected with the intended revolt, that the unsuspecting Mariana willingly bestowed that confidence on her seeming friend, which, as the sequel will demonstrate, eventually caused her destruction.

"Surely, my dearest Mariana," observed Elena, one deliciously cool evening, while busied with the glittering embroidery, "surely Soto Mayor will soon return?"

"May the Holy Virgin grant he may!" replied the other; "and yet I sometimes feel," she continued, "as though I dread his presence here."

"Blessed Mary!" exclaimed her friend, "dread Soto Mayor's presence, Mariana! What mean you, my fair cousin? for of a truth, your words sound in my ears so strangely in contradiction to what your deeds appear to my sight, that I know not how to reconcile the incongruity."

"Nay, nay, dearest Elena," smilingly replied Mariana, "you mistake me sadly, or rather, I should say, your astonishment is only feigned, since you cannot imagine it possible I should feel otherwise than happy when with my intended husband."

"So I should have imagined, and, in fact, so I ever thought," was the reply; "but did you not, a few seconds back, declare, that occasionally you felt as though you dreaded his return?"

"Truly said I so, my dear Elena," observed her cousin; "but the only dread I anticipate is connected with this, to me, ill-omened Banner."

"Why call you it so, Mariana?" was the reply, uttered in apparent astonishment. "Had I deemed it possible you considered a task imposed on you by Soto Mayor in the slightest degree irksome, I should have been the very last to urge you to the work."

"Of that I am confident," replied poor Mariana; "but the

only reason instigating me to the occupation, was the knowledge that Soto Mayor would be gratified at my exertions to please him."

"And yet," observed the artful girl, "knowing, as you well do, the manifold dangers which a betrayal of the secret would bring around him, have you not been somewhat rash in thus embarking in so hazardous an enterprise?"

"Hazardous I allow it truly is," answered Mariana; "but on me alone can the punishment fall. What connexion has Soto Mayor with this bit of gaudy silk? How can a discovery of its existence implicate him? No, no—until he unfurls its splendours to the breeze at the head of his brave partizans, this Banner remains with me, and, consequently, should it ever be known that such a standard has been wrought, none can be fixed on as the offender, save myself."

"But suspicion will indisputably be attached to his name," remarked Elena.

"Suspicion is not proof, cousin," was Mariana's reply; "besides, his known absence from Granada would go far to point out how little he can have participated in the matter."

"Of that I do not at all feel certain," remarked Elena; "but be it as it may, your confession—for confess you must—will soon drive away the frail protection with which you would willingly surround him."

"What confession?" eagerly demanded the handsome Spaniard.

"Nay, Mariana," reprovngly interrupted her friend, "you need not be so energetic in your manner. I merely meant, that with all our good resolves, how frequently are we compelled, through circumstances, to act far differently from what we had determined on, when the danger appears far distant."

"Go on," quickly remarked Mariana, speedily reassuming her former equanimity; "go on, Elena, I pray you; for as yet I understand you not,"

"No!" exclaimed the other, in a tone of astonishment; "do you not understand my meaning? Well, to be more explicit.

then, what I would convey amounts to this: Do you not suppose, that means *could* be put in force, to extract from your reluctant lips information which it may be in your power to give—do you not think that possible?”

“Mean you,” exclaimed the other, “whether I think it possible, that through any measures which human ingenuity might devise, I could be brought to criminate my future husband—is that your question?”

“Your words convey my exact meaning,” was the reply.

“You needed not to have asked the question,” answered her friend, as casting up her splendid eyes towards heaven, she meekly placed her hands across her bosom, and mentally vowed, should so horrid an alternative occur, to perish, rather than by word or look betray the man whom she had chosen as her partner through life.

With secret and not well-concealed satisfaction, did the wretched traitress know by the look of fixed resolve so vividly expressed in the angelic countenance before her, how well all progressed for the attainment of her diabolical plans; yet did she deem it necessary to add one more trial. Though well aware of the noble heroism of her cousin’s character, still there was the fear of *one* result which might be looked for, as a consequence of pertinaciously withholding the knowledge sought, calculated to strike terror into any mind—how much more so into that of a young and gentle woman.

“Have you,” commenced her questioner, “Mariana, have you ever thought of torture?”

“Mark me!” exclaimed the heroic girl, rising from her seat; “Elena, you have known me from infancy until now. I do not think you can call to mind an instance where punishment or fear of pain has ever induced me to turn from what I looked upon as the line of conduct I considered it my duty to pursue.”

“True, my dearest cousin,” retorted the other, sharply; “readily do I acknowledge it, and none can bear more willing testimony to your merits than myself; but,” she continued, with

a sneer, "the question I propounded just now did not regard your many excellencies, so much as it touched upon that most dreadful of all inflictions—torture."

"Torture the most refined—pain the most excruciating—humiliation the most degrading, never could wring from my lips the word that would bring disgrace and ruin upon my betrothed. But let us change the subject, Elena," added Mariana; "this is a theme I care not to dwell on; and may we hope, as I sincerely pray, that so horrible a vision as that you have conjured up, never may assume the appearance of reality. But why pursue so terrible, so dreadful a conversation? Let us rather look forward to the brighter side of the picture, which, by the blessing of the Holy Virgin, I trust may fall to our lot."

"So be it!" replied her companion; and without again recurring to the topic, the beautiful cousins continued their task in silence, until other duties compelled them to deposit the unfinished work in its accustomed hiding-place—an old and massive chest.

To none, save the two, was the existence of the banner known; and so cautious were they in taking measures calculated to prevent disclosure, that Mariana regarded it as next to impossible the secret could by any means transpire. Alas, poor girl! she little knew that the friend, the dear companion of her childhood, the beloved relation in whom she confidently trusted, was at that moment plotting, not only against her happiness, but her honour and her life.

But a short time back, and had it been even whispered to the now treacherous Elena, that a very brief period would elapse ere each kindlier feeling in her bosom favourable to her cousin, could be rooted out, and hatred—deadly, implacable hatred, planted in its place, she would have spurned the aspersion as a calumny—malicious, as it would be impossible to bring to pass; yet that period *did* arrive; and as the miserable girl communed with her own heart, and, ere the last gleam of virtue fled for ever, strove, though faintly, against her all-absorbing passion,

she felt it was impossible to drive the demon from his throne, and finally relinquished the struggle as unavailing.

Abhorring with unfeigned detestation the iniquitous control which Elena de Santaguella allowed to enthrall her, still it were impossible to withhold our pity, when we dwell on the agony she must have suffered, when first made aware of the awful precipice by which she stood.

Unwilling to admit even the possibility of so preposterous an idea, that it were within the bounds of credibility that she, the once true and faithful companion of her beloved cousin, should eventually attempt to supplant that confiding relation in the heart of her affianced husband, Elena de Santaguella, unheeding the danger to which she was exposed, never thought of averting the dreadful consequences until the veil was torn from her eyes, and she awoke to the unwelcome knowledge, that the flimsy plea of friendship could no longer be made use of as an apology for love.

The mental anguish she must have undergone during the painful conflict between right and wrong—between passion and duty—must have been terrible indeed; but when, at length, the destroying angel claimed the victory, and seized upon his prey, every sentiment of honour—every feminine feeling was uprooted from her bosom; yet who could suppose that so beautiful a casket as the almost angelic form of Elena de Santaguella, was but a receptacle of passions worthy of the boast of even the arch-fiend himself!

From appreciating the mental excellencies in Soto Mayor's character, the enthusiastic girl speedily learned to gaze with pleasure on his personal attractions. An interest in his well-being once created, an attachment speedily ensued, and as readily ripened into affection—not that pure, holy love, of which to be the chosen object strews the rugged path of life with the most beautiful flowers—not that soft, fervent, and unalterable affection, which, to possess, far exceeds in value all the blessings which earthly wealth, rank, or honour can bestow; but that

fierce and unscrupulous passion, which, rather than swerve one instant from its course, would cast aside every propriety enjoined by society—every fear of God, or dread of contumely from man, so that the one object be attained, let the price be what it might, at which the indulgence was to be purchased.

That Soto Mayor should become hers, Elena was resolutely determined; but as long as Mariana lived, she well knew how small was the probability of his affections being turned into another channel; yet, how to dispose of her cousin, and leave the object of her unhallowed love unscathed, appeared a difficult task to accomplish; still the prize was too valuable in her eyes to be readily surrendered without a struggle; and she felt it was utterly impossible to achieve her object as long as her devoted rival existed.

The better to gain her point, therefore, was it that the cunning of the traitress was exerted, in the endeavour to glean from her own lips what possibility there was of torture being enabled to wring from Mariana confession of participation in the offence on the part of Soto Mayor, and, from the conclusion arrived at on that memorable evening, she resolved immediately to put into execution the most vile cold-blooded act of treachery ever perpetrated upon earth.

The *Corregidor*, or chief civil magistrate, at Granada, at the period I treat of, was Don Antonio Ybanez, bigotted to the last degree as regarded political matters, and zealously devoted to the then ascendant dynasty, which, as already shewn, so many of the nation were as resolutely averse to. Various and frequent were the opportunities afforded this ill-judging functionary for persecuting to the utmost, those against whom either proof or suspicion rested of favouring, what was by some termed, the liberal party, but by their opponents stigmatized as factious rebels. It was not to be ascribed to want of perseverance on his side, that, hitherto, the victims whom he had entangled in his coils boasted not of aristocratic blood, but while he did not hesitate to attack the defenceless, even though guiltless of any

crime beyond what he was pleased to impeach as such, he cared not to trouble the nobles with his over-officious zeal, without being able to produce good and sufficient cause for interference.

Mere supposition of disloyalty, without proof to maintain the accusation, he was well aware might bring himself into trouble if acted on; and as this most worthy officer took as lively an interest in his own advantage as he did in that of any other person's misfortunes, he contented himself with watching for some tangible opportunity, when he hoped to fix upon offenders of yet higher rank than those who had hitherto experienced his tender mercies.

Fully alive to the benevolent intentions of the Mayor, all who were engaged in the contemplated revolt, naturally redoubled their caution in furnishing any visible pretext, by demonstration of which Don Antonio might think himself justified to meddle.

Much and deeply did the *Corregidor* ponder on the feasibility of detecting those noble families, against whom his active suspicions had long been raised; indeed, so virulently malicious was he on this point, and so pertinaciously energetic were his measures, that he was regarded as an object of detestation, and, consequently, cordially hated by all those who embraced a different line of politics from that which he advocated.

There were others within the walls of Granada, to the full as unbending as the Mayor, and being for the chief part men holding appointments under Government, they were naturally anxious for the continuance of the then *regime*, since, by change, they would indisputably lose all, without having the most remote prospect of gaining *any thing*.

To these colleagues, it was the wont of Don Antonio to turn for aid and support in the execution of any of his vindictive and tyrannical oppressions, and it is a matter of some doubt, to the present day, whether the injudicious persecutions which Granada was daily made to witness, did not materially bring about that consummation which the chief magistrate was so

anxious to suppress, by the exercise of that very system of cruelty by which it was nourished. Be that as it may, Antonio Ybanez persevered in his course, and well judging from what quarters he could rely for assistance, he hesitated not in resorting to measures calculated to justify any attempt which might be made to resist them.

From the fearful anarchy and disorder then spreading through Spain, it was deemed necessary to invest certain officers in trust, with power far surpassing the limit which should have been assigned, and therefore was it that the greatest of all despotism—that of depriving a fellow-creature of existence—was vested in the hands of persons who, through prejudice and virulent party-spirit, were the worst calculated for holding so awful a responsibility.

So important a functionary as the Mayor of Granada, and so zealous a supporter of the executive as he proved, was not likely to be overlooked when investing certain officers with the option of taking life; and by none was the boon received, who had less inclination to distribute impartial justice, than by Don Antonio Ybanez; not that the right existed in his own immediate person, without reference to others; but the necessary quorum to ensure a verdict was so small, and the influence of the Corregidor over the minds of his colleagues so great, that virtually it might have been said, the sentence rested solely with himself.

Such was the man, who, one afternoon, while seated in the *patio* of his mansion, his mental energies directed towards the best means to be adopted for attaining his great object, and his corporeal powers exercised in alternately inhaling and ejecting wreathes of smoke, received from the hands of a domestic a small note, but so fully engaged was the public officer with his engrossing cogitations, whether pleasant or otherwise, that the document remained unnoticed as long as his cigar continued unfinished, for deeply interesting and most vitally important to a Spaniard must that business be, which can divert his attention

from ignited tobacco ; but at length the "fragrant weed" was consumed, and, as if dismissing his ruminations, together with the ashes, the Mayor of Granada, emitting a deep sigh and cloud of white vapour at the same time, rose from his recumbent position, and while in the act of leaving the *patio*, his eye encountered the neglected *billet*.

It is a common habit with many, on receiving an unexpected despatch, to study and examine the seal and superscription, as if by those means the knowledge from whence and whom the letter comes, would be more readily obtained than by perusing the contents ; and so it was in this instance, for most marvelously unlike anything that usually fell into his hands was the missive then before him. The description of correspondence in which Don Antonio had most knowledge, generally came in the shape of large official packets from Government, or his colleagues, or, as the case might be, small dirty scraps of paper, despatched by some of his satellites, containing matter more approaching to what they knew he would gladly believe, than to any thing resembling truth.

But the note in question was evidently penned by a lady's hand, and so very remote was the period since the worthy functionary had created a spark of pleasurable feeling in the breast of any woman, that conjecture was wholly at a loss as to who could have been the compiler.

At length, having exhausted surmise, Don Antonio Ybanez removed the envelope ; and had he previously been acquainted with the contents, or had conjecture led him to anticipate what the substance of the information could have been, the cigar, cogitations, and easy chair likewise, would long since have been cast aside in favour of the epistle.

His first impulse was to despatch a domestic to summon to his presence two of the least scrupulous and most devoted of his allies, which having done, the Corregidor again and again perused the paper in his hand, but regarding which, it was evident he was far from reaching any satisfactory conclusion.

The two worthies destined to complete the trio at the council, were Don Jose Martinez, and Don Juan Acentio, fit and willing coadjutors of their chief.

"My friends," exclaimed the Mayor to his wondering guests, breathless as they were by reason of the haste with which they had obeyed his call, "my friends, from this small note, which I received some time since, but little conjecturing the contents, it would appear that the main object of our unceasing anxiety is about to be attained—that one of the leaders in this most atrocious conspiracy, will, at all events, fall within our power : but read the information as I got it, and then judge for yourselves." So saying, Don Antonio placed the paper before the astonished Senors, and thus ran its contents :—

"If you would know the prime mover in the anticipated revolt, promise solemnly, in writing, that you will not, by word or deed, endeavour to trace, discover, or enquire, who your informer may be : a person will be at the third pillar in the south aisle of the cathedral, at vespers to-morrow, there to receive your reply."

Long and seriously did the conclave deliberate and surmise as to whom they were indebted for the important information to be received, but wide indeed were their conjectures from the truth. The high rate at which they appreciated their own consequence, forbade the idea that the letter could have been written as a hoax, rather than as an important revelation ; and as the only apparent means by which their awakened curiosity could be satisfied, and their party-feelings pandered to, was to obey the dictate of the writer, by conforming to the proposed terms, they resolved to accept the assignation at the cathedral, and the demanded stipulation was immediately drawn out and placed in the hands of a trusty emissary, for the purpose of being handed to the figure, whom they confidently expected would be ready to receive it at the appointed time and place.

The result more than exceeded their most sanguine hopes ; but, as the sequel of the narrative will reveal, well would it

have been for all parties concerned in the diabolical plot, had they allowed the common dictates of humanity to have swayed their actions, rather than have lent themselves as participators in a deed, for which they have justly been classed amongst the worst description of ruffians, who have at any time, disgraced the annals of a country. Had they foreseen the dread retaliation which their cruelty would entail upon themselves, far differently would have been their conduct; but, goaded by an ill-directed zeal, they rushed towards their undefended victim with that insatiable thirst for blood, which, when once thoroughly planted in the breast of man, renders him a more formidable antagonist to encounter than even the savage denizen of the forest.

\* \* \* \* \*

"I regret, dearest Mariana," remarked the handsome Elena de Santaguella, two days subsequent to the receipt of the note by Don Antonio and his colleagues, "I regret I cannot aid you in your delightful labours this morning; but having received a message from my aunt, whom, you know, I dare not offend, I shall be obliged, however reluctantly, to spend the day in far less agreeable society than that of my sweet cousin."

"Indeed, Elena," replied the unconscious victim, "it would be selfish on my part, were I to expect the happiness I derive from your companionship to last for ever. Deeply am I already indebted to your kindness, in having aided me so efficiently with the Banner; and now," she added, raising it triumphantly on high, "it requires little more than the small piece of fringe being added; and then welcome, doubly welcome, Soto Mayor's arrival, knowing how enchanted he will be at the expedition and success of our work."

"True, dearest," replied her companion, though, with a pallid countenance averted, she gazed into the street, yet heedless of the many objects which there met her eye. "But tell me, Mariana," she continued, with a desperate effort to appear calm, "tell me if you think the Banner will be finished to-day? for if any doubt exists, I will, with pleasure, forego my intended

visit, and remain to assist, rather than incur the chance of Soto Mayor returning, and finding the standard yet in progress."

"Thanks, dear Elena—a thousand thanks; but on no account shall your good kind aunt be deprived of your society through fault of mine; no, no; what remains to be done, I can easily accomplish ere dark, and then I trust to merit your approval for my diligence when you see me again. God bless you, dearest, farewell!" and throwing her beautifully-rounded arms on her companion's neck, she fondly kissed her ere they parted.

As if by instinct, Elena returned the embrace, yet no sound escaped her lips—no responsive smile played round her well-chiselled mouth; but rapidly she hid her countenance in the ample folds of her dark mantilla, and turned towards the door; yet ere she crossed the threshold, for an instant, she stood as if irresolute before quitting the apartment. Once her graceful figure inclined, as though about to return; for a moment her lips moved; and who may say what the result might have been, had not her eyes fallen on the calm, dignified, and placid features of her friend. In that one glance, the fate of Mariana was sealed; hatred, revenge, and the canker of disappointment, rushed to the aid of the traitress, and, without further look or word, she rushed, half distracted, from the house.

The die was cast—the fiat had gone forth. But who would barter the most acute anguish, which they may imagine it possible to endure, in exchange for the conflicting pangs, which tore that proud woman's breast, during her few brief moments of hesitation and doubt?

Guileless herself, not a shadow of suspicion crossed Mariana's mind, of the existence of the dreadful tragedy then preparing, and of which *she* was destined to become the victim, for never having harboured a thought which, by any misconstruction, could militate against the happiness of a human being, the idea that it was possible for others to contemplate injury towards herself, sullied not her pure thoughts.

Far otherwise was her mind occupied, while she exerted herself to accomplish the remaining portion of the work which would render the Embroidered Banner perfect ; and during the time that her small taper fingers were curiously threading the complicated mazes of her labour, imagination carried her far from the spot where she toiled at her dangerous task.

Naturally Mariana reverted to the expected happiness dependent on her beloved Soto Mayor's return ; fondly she pictured to herself the possibility of the hoped-for events coming to pass without bloodshed, which were so interwoven with the anxious desires of many ; the probability that government would relax from the unbending determination it had hitherto evinced in enforcing its decrees ; and then, should Heaven so bless her country, the enthusiastic girl pondered on the anticipation of years of unalloyed happiness, which, with her beloved husband, she dared to hope might prove her lot.

Poor Mariana, would that I could tell the melancholy story of your sufferings, with one half the pathos with which the circumstances were related to myself ! Yet what avails it now ? Nothing can reanimate that once more than lovely form, and naught remains unsatisfied, which the most unbending vengeance could claim as her due. Awful indeed was thy fate—and awfully—most awfully—have you been avenged.

Noon was passing away, but still toiled the beautiful girl at her frame. The gorgeous banner, emblazoned with the approved watchword of the patriot band, rested its many folds of rich silk and glittering gold on the couch beside which Mariana plied her needle. One portion of the standard was in her hand, the last remaining addition was on the point of being added to her labours, as the crowning finale ; when, almost heedless of passing occurrences—so wholly absorbed in mental reverie had she been—the betrayed girl suddenly started from her seat, uttering a piercing scream, as she felt the pressure of a heavy hand laid upon her arm.

One glance—one instant's recollection was sufficient for the





ensnared victim to comprehend the extent of her danger : the grasp arresting the progress of her delicate work, was occasioned by the ferocious clutch of Don Antonio Ybanez for the possession of the standard, while at his side stood his two coadjutors, and in a second a company of soldiers rushed hurriedly across the room.

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And where was Soto Mayor while his young and devoted Mariana lay pining in a loathsome dungeon ? Could it be possible—as by some was afterwards affirmed—that swayed by craven fear, he lay crouching in cowardice and trembling, unconscious or uncaring for aught on earth, beyond the degrading selfishness of personal security from harm ? Sorry would any man be to think so basely of human nature ; and having seen the proud ambitious youth ready to dare all, even at the risk of losing what on earth he most coveted—the hand of his mistress—when summoned in defence of what he conceived to be his country's rights—was it likely such a man, when the cherished of his heart, the idol of every fond imagining, might have been rescued from despair and death by one small word by him spoken, is it possible that *he* would have withheld that talismanic charm, and have allowed the young, the beautiful, and good, to expire on the public scaffold for his sake alone, rather than unbind her soft and tender limbs, by offering himself in her stead ? No ! it is *not* possible ; love, courage, every attribute dear to man, shrinks appalled at the contemplation of such grovelling baseness ; and assuredly Soto Mayor was not one on whom so overwhelming a stigma could be fixed.

As *I* heard the tale, far otherwise was the fact ; deceived, and doubly betrayed by her whom he never doubted was his friend, the impatient cavalier was fain content to seclude himself in the fastnesses of the mountains, until the dark suspicions that Elena de Santaguella took care should reach him, were reported as having been erased from his name. Deeply did he appreciate

the apparent generosity of that beautiful girl, who rather than allow Mariana to risk even the chance of appearing in the dangerous plot, took upon herself the odium, and braved the danger of warning her dupe not to approach the vicinity of Grenada, until the reports now so currently circulated, had faded away. Of her cousin, she spoke not in her letter ; but that was but to Soto Mayor's mind another proof of the cautious foresight of his guardian, since she evidently avoided mention of names, for reasons easily understood ; and the confiding lover found solace in that very silence, since he was convinced that had his betrothed been otherwise than well, he must have been apprised of it by word or signet from her friend.

Thus passed the weary hours of his monotonous banishment. He dared not wander from his recesses, amid the rocks and mountains, for fear of missing the messenger whom he so impatiently, and with such anxiety, awaited. To descend to the plain, and hold communion with the inmates of the town, he was taught to regard as madness ; certain that the moment when his loathed captivity could be shaken off, he would be cheerfully summoned from his irksome hiding-place.

But far different were the meditations of the victim immured in the fastnesses of a gloomy prison ; cast into a loathsome cell, where the light of heaven was never known to shed its glorious beams—subjected to all that art or cruelty could devise, in the hope of wringing from that young creature the secret she resolved never to betray, tortured by the most fervent asseverations of pardon, and inspired by the picture of liberty, which, in contrast to an ignominious death, her persecutors were for ever dinning in her ears ; still that beauteous maiden, strong in conscious rectitude and unswerving love, boldly discomfited the craftiest of the wretches by whom she was surrounded, striving to wring from her constant and devoted heart the word which would have consigned her lover to the scaffold.

It was mid-day : the sun, in all his magnificence, cast his

beams around each gilded minaret of the Moorish palace. Birds of every hue spread forth their variegated plumage, as they sportively played around the splashing fountains in the court. It was a time so mild, so serenely beautiful, that the most ascetic and discontented among mankind could not have refused acknowledging the irresistible power which the unparalleled goodness of God had so bountifully poured forth to gladden the hearts of his creatures.

Yet, amid the thousands that crowded the busy streets of Granada, and the many more otherwise occupied, and all partaking of the genial influence of the day, could it be possible that one, even one bosom in that proud city, could beat so coldly, as utterly to disregard the blessing unreservedly showered upon all? Is it indeed possible? Ah! wherefore put the question! Look around among the young, the happy, and the thoughtless, who readily grasp at pleasure as it comes, nor ask, nor heed they for what period it may last, never contemplating that aught can rise to mar the felicity of the joyous hour. Strange infatuation! Still, the day-charm of youth glides gaily on; and it is not until the fragile bark, by the adverse current of life's stream, is eventually driven against one or other of the hidden shoals that lie unseen, that we finally discover no exception is likely to be made in our own favour more than in that of others.

As I have already said, it was a beautiful day, and little did the many whose bright eyes glanced from the shaded balconies on the variegated groups beneath, imagine that, while all seemed happiness around, there was *one* innocent being—by far the best and loveliest of them all—yet but a few yards distant, pining out her days in solitude and darkness.

The dungeon wherein Mariana de Pieneda was entombed, was far below the surface of the earth. Darkness there reigned supreme, save when the flickering light from some lurid torch was made to throw its ruddy glare upon the walls, giving to sight the numerous and complicated instruments of torture strewn around, the existence of which to record, is to stamp

the bigotted inventors of such cruelties with the attributes of fiends.

In that dark cold chamber, in solitude and misery unspeakable, lay the young and tenderly-nurtured Mariana, her couch a disgusting mass of mouldering straw. But what were the discomforts of her personal position, compared to the agony of her mind? The mental wretchedness that poor girl underwent, must have exceeded all the bodily torture ingenuity could invent; but as the sequel proves, neither promises nor threats—torture the most refined—no, nor the certainty of a painful and ignominious death, could turn her from the generous purpose of secreting from her persecutors the knowledge of the hiding-place of her beloved.

It might have been mid-day, or the dark hour of night, for all poor Mariana knew to the contrary, when the key turned in the lock of her prison-door. The bolts were slowly withdrawn from their rusty and long-disused fastenings, and by the light carried by an attendant, she observed several figures enter the apartment.

Noiselessly, and as by stealth, one by one, the dark forms choking up the passage, glided in silence across the threshold of the dungeon, and arranged themselves around the prostrate form of their victim. Many days had elapsed since Mariana had been immured within that detested building; but though her soul still glowed with the fond devotion of woman's first and only love for the one adored object which, in *her* estimation, appeared the very ideal of perfection—and although for no instant did her thoughts revert to the possibility of obtaining release from her sufferings at the price so frequently demanded, yet would she have been more than woman, had not the slender frame, the fragile form, and delicately-cherished figure, sunk under the awful excitement which the gentle girl had been compelled to undergo—more, far more from mental agony, than by the intense bodily suffering she had already experienced.

Weak and attenuated, the beautiful creature had scarce

strength to raise herself from the revolting bed of filth, where, from sheer exhaustion, and the almost absence of the necessities of life, she had cast herself down, fondly hoping that the hour had arrived, which was to end her trials upon earth. But so blessed a consummation was not near; the bitter dregs yet remained untasted in the cup; and it was decreed they should be drained to the last drop the chalice could contain.

"Mariana de Pieneda," commenced a hollow, discordant voice, "arise, and reply to the questions which, in our mercy, we offer for your consideration. Obstinacy, such as yours, if persevered in, must meet its just reward—a terrible, an ignominious end: yet wherefore should such happen? With you it rests, by one word, instantly to dispel the appalling symbols of death, and dissipate for ever the scene by which you are surrounded, and again shall you be received into the bosom of that family, whom, through your pertinacious obstinacy, you are rendering wretched indeed. Utter but the one word required, and instantly shall this dread paraphernalia pass away, as by magic; the dark ceiling of this vault shall be exchanged for the bright canopy of the blue sky; the strange forbidding features which now glare frightfully around your loathsome couch, shall be succeeded by the fond anxious faces of those by whom so justly you are loved. Picture to yourself the happiness, the enthusiastic expressions of delight, the gush of pure, unalloyed affection, which will assuredly greet your return to the arms of friends whom, by your voluntary absence, you are rendering most miserable. But why should I pursue the theme? Neither my colleagues nor myself revel in anticipation of horrors sufficient to stagnate the warm current flowing in our veins. Yet what course can be pursued?—what demand will be made by a justly-incensed country, when your crime is bruited abroad, and your abhorred and traitorous designs exposed?"

"Cease, oh cease your invectives, I implore you!" cried the distracted girl. "What crimes have I committed?—what

thoughts even have I harboured, which can justify any one in exposing me to the humiliating misery I now endure?"

"It is not on you, Mariana," interrupted Don Jose Martinez, "it is not on you we would fain visit the punishment to be inflicted as the award of your rebellious act; far otherwise is it wished; and as proof of our sincerity, and a guarantee for the earnestness of our professions, we have now descended to this vault, offering to restore you, on the instant, to peace and happiness, light and life, if——"

"If what?" almost fiercely demanded their victim, roused to a momentary exhibition of strength, which could but dazzle for the instant, to fade almost instantly away. "What is it you demand?" again exclaimed Mariana. "What return can it be in the power of a wretched victim like myself to offer for the blessings you propose?"

"The name of him for whom you worked the rebel Banner," slowly drawled out Ybanez.

"What mean you by rebel?" instantly rejoined their victim. "I retort the word! I spurn the charge! and cast it back indignantly to those who dare stigmatize me with the term!"

"Nay, lady," chimed in the rough voice of one of the assembled monsters, "we will not quibble about a term, nor argue with La Senorita Mariana Pieneda on so knotty and momentous a point. Let it suffice, we hold *our* own opinion on this matter, while you entertain yours. Still, be the appellation correct or not, the issue will be found the same: and therefore is it," continued this brute in human form, "that the award having gone forth, either you, as the participator, or the person for whom the Banner was embroidered, as instigator of the act, must be prepared to meet the consequence of the deed."

"Yet bethink thee, lady," observed Don Juan Ascentio, by far the most humane of that remorseless group, "bethink thee, that in all common justice, he who planned the act, and who, by aid of specious argument, and appeal to the kindlier, though perhaps weaker feelings of woman, inculcates another, he, it

most assuredly is, who should bear the brunt of the development of a crime, and not the passive instrument, by whose aid he hoped to attain his end, while keeping afar from danger, he urged on the desperate work of which hereafter he expected to derive the benefit."

"You utter words inapplicable to the case," returned Mariana, on whose gentle mind the less savage tone of Don Juan's voice, when compared with those of his colleagues, sensibly made its impression; "you know not of whom, nor of what you speak."

"Nay, then," exclaimed the wily Corregidor, "if, Mariana, you will deign to enlighten us on this matter, peradventure, we may find the case, in all its bearings, less criminal than at present it appears."

"You say we know not of whom we speak, lady," quietly observed Don Juan.

"Neither do you," replied the persecuted girl. "Could you but be aware of——" but then the sentence was abruptly broken; for, despite of her anxiety to vindicate the fame of her beloved, the anxious piercing countenances around her, denoting greedy expectation, acted as a ready check upon the spontaneous outburst of her generous feeling, which, had it been allowed to find utterance, would, in all probability, have delivered her lover to the block, and, possibly, without bettering her own condition, beyond permission to quit the world with him on whom she doated with all the fervour of a woman's first and fervent love.

For a time, the conclave waited for a continuance of the declaration, which they had already pictured to themselves would put them in possession of what they most cared to become acquainted with; but as the continued silence of the prisoner denoted her resolution to remain silent, Don Antonio Ybanez once more essayed to speak, in the hope of effecting his object.

"Picture not to yourself," he recommenced, "that by human aid deliverance can reach you here: though of necessity your absence is no secret from your friends, still they know not where you are. Our plans were so matured at the period of

your arrest, that none were made cognizant of our presence, save those who for good and sufficient reasons dare not utter on the subject. It is true, the city is aware that some state criminal has been detected in the commission of treason, and consequently must meet the doom by law prescribed ; but none can guess the victim. Therefore, for the last time, I am desirous of impressing on your mind the wickedness and folly of persisting in your obstinate resolve. But one word uttered by your lips, and you shall be restored to your friends, with so plausible a reason for your absence, that none can surmise the true story remains untold. The comparatively innocent will be released, and the guilty, as is his just reward, shall be left to suffer in your stead. For the last time, Mariana de Pieneda, I enquire for whom was the Embroidered Banner worked?"

"What if I refuse to declare?" demanded, in reply, the dauntless girl.

"What if you refuse to declare?" echoed her tormentor, slowly repeating the exact words she uttered.

"Yes," replied Mariana, her features pale as though the gallant spirit had left its beauteous frame ; "what fate will your cruelty wreak on a weak and defenceless woman, should she refuse to give the information you would wring from her? Again I ask, what will be the consequence were I to refuse?"

"Death!" muttered the iron-hearted Ybanez—"a long, a cruel, and a painful death; the death of a malefactor on the felon's scaffold; the gaze and scoff of thousands; the object of detestation while living; the theme of universal obloquy and execration when dead."

"And such must be the fate of him whom you wish me to denounce?" almost shrieked the horror-stricken prisoner.

"Or *yours*, should you persevere in your wilful and pertinacious silence," was the reply.

"Then be it *mine*!" exclaimed Mariana, when the worst that could befall her was made known. "Let that dreadful suffering fall on me, rather than on him. From this hour I hold no

further converse with you. Cold, bloody, and remorseless as you are, seek not to persecute me further. If you determine that in a brief period I end my days upon the scaffold, let your thirst for torture be restrained, until I am brought forth to suffer to ignominious an end ; but until that hour arrives, leave me to myself. Behold," she exclaimed, pointing to the dungeon door, " I care not for your presence here ! Leave me to my misery—Begone !"

The scowling instruments of oppression turned their lowering brows away, and not venturing a reply in justification of further persecution, or caring to remain in despite of the poor girl's commands, with slow steps and scowling visage, each of the cold-blooded tyrants turned towards the passage, when, having stooped under the low archway, forming a portion of the portal at the narrow entrance, and guided by the uncertain glare of the torch, they wended their way upward towards the blessed light of day, mentally rejoicing at having quitted the horrible abode of wretchedness and filth.

As the last examiner passed the threshold, the rusty bolts were forced into their sockets—the huge key revolved in the locks of the prison-door, and the over-wrought energies of the pure and innocent victim, taxed beyond the power of nature to support, Mariana sank upon her revolting pallet, insensible alike to present misery and anticipation of future torment.

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So publicly was the engagement between Soto Mayor and Mariana Pieneda bruited about, as to render it impossible for the former to escape suspicion, when his affianced bride was detected in the act of weaving together those golden threads, which, when completed, pourtrayed in brilliant colours the Banner of rebellion ; and, consequently, but a brief period elapsed after poor Mariana's incarceration, ere the *Corregidor*, with the full sanction of his colleagues, dispatched his emissaries to effect the capture of her betrothed.

The foresight of Elena de Santaguella, as already shown,

fully anticipating such a movement as the inevitable result of her cousin's detection, forestalled the danger by forwarding to Soto Mayor such earnest entreaties for continuing his absence from Grenada, as produced immediate compliance with her request—the more readily, as he viewed in the earnestness of her solicitations, an irrefragable proof of regard for himself, as also an evident desire to shield from harm one, whom, she well knew, was loved by him as devotedly as man's affection can be lavished on the object of his choice.

From Elena de Santaguella, therefore, Soto Mayor received with confidence the unwelcome intelligence that strong suspicion was attached to himself, as having aided, and, indeed, being then engaged in organising, those bands of Guerrillas by whose dauntless intrepidity it was expected attempts would ere long be made to overthrow the existing government.

No intelligence was conveyed to him regarding the discovery of the Banner, and, consequently, the fate of Mariana remained unknown to her lover, who, fondly believing his betrothed was safe and protected amid the large circle of her friends, could not too deeply appreciate the generous daring of her who, rather than suffer her cousin to incur risk, boldly adopted measures for ensuring liberty to himself, and—as he sanguinely hoped—happiness ere long to both.

Not the shadow of a doubt as to Elena's sincerity crossed his mind; and fervently did he invoke blessings on the generous woman, whom he regarded in his hour of peril, as a tried and true friend indeed.

Carefully avoiding contact with any one, and not daring to approach the city, the only information Soto Mayor could gather, was through the brief epistles he received, which, with his food, were deposited by an emissary of Elena's, in a lone and nearly inaccessible chasm, buried amid the hills in the neighbourhood of Santa Fé; to which spot he was directed to repair at a certain hour; yet strenuously warned, on no consideration whatever, to utter question, or to retard the return of the bearer.

To these conditions the wanderer rigidly adhered ; and, secure in the good faith of her who imposed the restrictions, he waited with what patience he could command, for the period of emancipation from his banishment.

Thus-far the machinations of the reckless plotter prospered ; and, could she but continue Soto Mayor in ignorance of Mariana's danger until human interference in her behalf would prove unavailing, she doubted not but time, coupled with the influence of her acknowledged personal attractions, aided by untiring devotion to his every wish, would eventually wean his thoughts from the contemplation of the terrible past, and lead him to seek future consolation and comfort in the affection of a being so devoted to him as herself.

Having discovered so valuable and unlooked-for an auxiliary, as Elena de Santaguella proved herself, Don Antonio Ybanez resolved on turning his new coadjutor to further advantage, beyond the attainment of the benefit he expected to reap through the betrayal of her friend ; and shrewdly imagining that one so intimately acquainted with the secrets of the intended bride, must possess some knowledge regarding her betrothed, he hesitated not in holding forth, in vivid colours, every description of brilliant reward, which his cunning could suggest, as likely to influence the actions of a bold and unprincipled woman, hoping thereby ultimately to entangle Soto Mayor himself within his meshes.

Seeming compliance with the *Corregidor's* desire was absolutely necessary to her own safety, and while inveigling the magistrate into the belief, that, to the uttermost of her ability, she was accelerating his views, the double traitress was placed in a position to apprise the denounced so correctly, regarding each contemplated movement of his enemies, as effectually enabled him to baffle their well-concerted efforts for accomplishing his capture.

Acknowledgment to any one, of the source from whence the chief magistrate obtained his information, save as regarded his colleagues, formed no part of the *Corridor's* intention, and,

consequently, Elena de Santaguella continued to be received by the afflicted family of her victim, as a relation who had ever proved herself the affectionate and devoted ally of her unhappy cousin.

Access to the prisoner was forbidden by the authorities, with the exception of admission into the building of those whom the wretched girl herself might express a desire to behold. But Mariana, anxious as the unhappy victim naturally was once more to gaze on the countenances of those she loved, courageously denied herself the gratification, though ardently coveted, knowing as she well did, that a wish to that effect uttered by her, would prove tantamount to involving those she might name in similar danger with herself.

Little cared the Corregidor to prove the motive which actuated his informer to betray the once-loved companion of her childhood, and the chosen friend of her after years; it was enough for him to possess the information, which proved so conducive to his wishes; and as Soto Mayor still evaded his grasp, and infuriated at receiving, day after day, further confirmation of the approaching outbreak, he resolved to bring the punishment of his victim to a speedy and an awful close.

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Three days passed away, and the drear solitude and silence of Mariana's dungeon had been broken upon only by the heart-rending sighs of the wretched prisoner, and the periodical entrance of the ferocious-looking jailer, who, placing before her the scanty meal barely sufficient to preserve existence, invariably departed without a word in reply to the many questions advanced by the helpless girl.

As far as the victim could conjecture, it was now again about the period for the return of the keeper; neither was she mistaken; for on unbolting the door of the narrow cell, the guardian of that loathsome dungeon intimated, more by signs than words, she was to follow whither he might lead.

To her, poor captive, any change at the moment appeared

immeasurably advantageous. Escape from the disgusting vault, where for so many days she had been immured, to inhale once more the pure air of heaven, was, in her estimation, an exchange incomparably welcome, even though the coming hour brought with it agony—ay, even death itself.

Weak and emaciated, she drew her tottering steps along the damp and slimy pavement, unheeding to what place she was led; but in the hope that, be her destination where it may, the awful abode she had just quitted might never again receive her as an inmate, while life animated her frame. And the mentally-breathed prayer of the deserted girl was destined to be complied with.

Ushered into a long gloomy chamber, the extremity of which was undiscernible in the distance, Mariana beheld, by the dim light of a few tapers, shedding their sickly glimmer on the scene, the ruthless countenances of her former interrogators.

On the furrowed visages of those stern judges, mercy had left no trace, if indeed so benign an attribute ever held even transient occupation in their breasts.

Slowly and painfully the doomed girl moved towards the table near where the Corregidor and his coadjutors were seated, and on which was placed, as though in mockery of contrast to the sombre hue around, the glittering folds of the ill-omened banner.

“Mariana Pieneda,” commenced Don Antonio Ybanez, breaking the awful silence in that chamber of condemnation, “again we offer you the choice of liberty and life, if, in conformity with our commands, you disclose the name of him at whose instigation you wove the insignia displayed on this accursed banner;” and pointing to the gorgeously-emblazoned standard, he fixed his cold grey eyes on the death-like countenance of his prisoner.

“Time, ay, and more, much more than sufficient time,” exclaimed the harsh voice of Don Juan Ascentio, “has been granted by the mercy of those before whom you now stand, to enable you to ponder on the fearful result which must inevitably occur, should you perseveringly continue in your fruitless and

unavailing obstinacy. Well is it known to us for whose rebellious hand this tawdry symbol of revolt was worked; but from *your* lips must we have the confirmation of our intelligence pronounced, a confirmation procuring in your favour immediate liberation and unconditional pardon for your crime. If, on the contrary, you pertinaciously determine on maintaining silence, you will share the doom of him, who, ere this day's sun shall sink in the west, will assuredly be numbered among those who *once* were, but who will then be no more. Mariana Pineda," continued her inexorable judge, "once more, and for the last time, I repeat—decide!"

"Our Lady forbid!" exclaimed the beautiful sufferer, extending her clasped hands towards the stone-hearted triumvirate. "Surely *one* life is sufficient to appease your bitter wrath; therefore, on me let your vengeance be wreaked—on *me*, a weak, defenceless woman, and thus let your vindictive persecution be satiated. But," she continued, drawing her faultless figure to its full height, and appearing even more lovely in that hour of agonizing trial, than when basking in the sunshine of happier days, "I give no credence to your words. He, at whose destruction you aim, is far removed from your tyrannical power, and thanks to the holy Virgin, unconscious of the degradation at this moment heaped upon myself—I repeat, I give no credit to your tale. He for whom the ill-fated Banner was woven, is at this moment free, ay, free in person as in soul. Never shall he experience the humiliation of finding *his* limbs manacled by chains. Never will he find a resting-place within these accursed walls. Full well I know *my* doom is fixed, and less than useless would appeals for mercy prove, before this cruel, unrelenting tribunal; but here, on the very brink of that futurity from whence none who enter ever can return, I solemnly prophesy, as certainly as inevitably it will come to pass, that I suffer a slow and painful death, so sure will retribution, terrible and unexpected, be visited on the heads of each, and all of those who participate in furthering my destruction. An hour will

come, a period now marked in the dark book of fate, at which each accessory to my murder shall reap a horrible, an agonising award, in retribution for the cold-blooded sacrifice which at this instant you heedlessly premeditate. Mark well my words," continued the excited captive, assuming that proud dignity of bearing which well attested the innate consciousness of her immeasurable superiority of soul, above the cowardly hearts then quailing before her; "mark well my words," she continued, her bright eyes flashing with a brilliancy almost superhuman. "Remember my prophecy when I am no more; reflect on what I now utter, when you repose in fancied security amid those who are dear to you in life; at the festive board, surrounded by all that can enchain the senses; in the dark hour of night; in the apparent safety of broad day; at home and abroad; at all times, and in all places; remember there is a death, a sure, a violent, and painful death, to which *my* end will but appear but as the moment preceding an infant's calm repose, awaiting one and all concerned in this day's dreadful tragedy. Not one—no, not one shall escape, who becomes instrumental in bringing a daughter of the noble house that claims me, to an ignominious end! And now, for the last time, I repeat—beware!"

"Enough of this," observed Don Jose Martinez, raising his voice, glad of any pretext for endeavouring to shake off an undefined sensation of awe creeping over him, and which he perceived was enchaining the mental faculties of his colleagues also. "These empty prognostications of future evil weigh not with us: we heed not the imbecile ravings of an infatuated woman, bent, even at the sacrifice of herself, in shielding from justice the dastardly instigator of her crime. Yet are we still desirous of sparing one of Granada's daughters from the shame of public exposure, and from the agony of an ignominious death. We seek not your life; our sole motive is the preservation of the state; but if in obduracy you persist in refusing utterance of the name of him whom we well know as the chief criminal in the treasonable act for which you are here arraigned,

then may the saints look down with pity on you from above, since mercy cannot be extended to such delinquency as yours on earth."

"Mariana Pieneda," slowly and with scarcely distinguishable utterance, recommenced Don Antonio Ybanez, "my colleague has justly observed, how puerile must vain and passionate threats appear, when uttered in exculpation of your offence; neither can it avail in extenuation of punishment, which, when decreed, will be approved of by all loyal subjects, and, when carried into execution, must be attributed solely to your insane perseverance in an erroneous idea of honour—Soto Mayor is in our power! Say then, Mariana Pieneda, was it not for your affianced husband the fatal silk was worked?"

The brave beautiful girl gazed at her interrogator with a dignified expression of unmitigated contempt; and folding her exquisitely-moulded arms across a heart as replete with generous and intrepid feeling as ever throbbed in woman's breast, gazed steadily and without emotion on her oppressor, but replied not by word or further sign.

A few seconds of deep silence interposed, when the Corregidor, after a brief but inaudible consultation with his subordinates, exclaimed in a tone of voice, tremulous with dread at what the consequence *might* prove, resulting from the fiat he was about to pronounce—

"You have refused our clemency; you have rejected the mercy so leniently vouchsafed you; leaving nothing now for me to utter beyond the reluctant, though, alas, imperative sentence—death!"

\* \* \* \* \*

The destruction or release of the victim in no degree rested on her acquiescence with the disclosure demanded; for already had her fate been sealed by the unbending resolve of the judges, and, ere the option was afforded of betraying her betrothed, orders had been issued for the erection of the scaffold, and all

the dread paraphernalia of death was arrayed in the *Plaza*, some hours previous to the prisoner receiving sentence.

But a few minutes intervened between the interview recorded, ere the unhappy girl, scarcely conscious of what was passing around, found herself placed in the centre of a long procession, wending its slow progress towards the spot whereon it was destined her earthly sufferings were to cease.

It was mid-day when the deep voices of the priests—broken only by the loud tolling of the funeral bell, chanting the death dirge—struck to the hearts of the thousands assembled to witness a spectacle, the full accomplishment of which few among the multitude believed the authorities would show sufficient temerity to carry into effect.

Conciliatory measures at that period would have done more towards favouring the cause which the *Corregidor* and his colleagues espoused, than by enforcing to the uttermost of their ability those sanguinary measures whereby they trusted to strike terror and intimidate the opposing party ; but the die was cast. In their bigoted hatred towards those opposed to their political views, they passed the rubicon, which could never be retrod ; and to recede from their openly-avowed resolve of exterminating all who questioned the mandates of the Government, was now rendered impossible.

Openly had they denounced a member of one of the noblest families in Spain, and, strange as it may appear, they had hitherto been permitted to portray their hatred to their opponents through the persecution of one of the purest and most lovely women their country could claim as a daughter.

It was a period, however, when no man dared utter aloud his real sentiments on public matters ; all was doubt and suspicion ; and though the contracted brow and clenched hands of many a gallant *caballero* bore evidence to the feelings raging at his heart, none dared espouse the cause of the fair girl approaching, since no man could calculate on aid from the densely-crowded mass of human beings then present.

Many were there who, at all risk, would have nobly rushed forth and attempted the rescue of one so beautiful and beloved, had a shadow of success in the endeavour presented itself; but, as before stated, none dared openly avow his detestation of the coming butchery, and consequently the unhappy Mariana ascended the scaffold without a hand being stretched forth in her behalf, while, had the sentiments pervading the bosoms of nearly every witness of the scene been communicated to each other, the weak, though still dauntless woman, then on the brink of eternity, would have instantaneously been snatched from her peril, and the cowardly oppressors effectually rendered incapable of committing further atrocity and crime.

But such was not to be; an oppressive silence pervaded those within the square; not a murmur escaped the crowd; it seemed as though each living being was suddenly converted into stone; all were awe-struck, all were motionless; and without one effort being made in behalf of a creature so formed to love and to adore, the Banner was reduced to ashes on the scaffold; the iron collar encircled one of the fairest necks nature ever vouchsafed to woman, and, amid the gaze and horror of thousands, the ruffianly executioner performed his disgusting task, and in less than a second, the disfigured corpse was all that remained of the fondly-idolized and beautiful Mariana.

But an hour passed, when, if revisiting the spot, all that had occurred might have been registered as a dream. No trace of the foul murder remained; the countless multitude had disappeared; the awe-inspiring scaffold, with its lugubrious draperies, had been removed; the buzz of human beings was unheard; not a loiterer occupied the Plaza, save one man, so effectually enveloped in the ample folds of his dark cloak, as to preclude the possibility of recognition, and he appeared carefully, and by stealth, occupied in collecting what remained of the burnt ashes of the "Embroidered Banner."

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Numerous were the surmises which stole across the minds of

those who beheld the awful spectacle which that day's sun shone upon, regarding the cause of Soto Mayor's unaccountable absence, for none who knew the circumstance of his betrothal, hesitated for a moment in arriving at the conclusion, that for him had the now desecrated Banner been intended. Those best acquainted with his character felt convinced *his* was not the coward spirit to avert danger to himself, by willingly permitting the noble spirit that day departed, to suffer in his stead. All was mystery and conjecture; but the cause which the *Corregidor* and his partizans hoped to crush by their ill-timed severity, rose, hydra-headed, from poor Mariana's scaffold.

Disgust and deep-rooted thirst for vengeance were engendered in the minds of hundreds, who beheld the awful punishment awarded for what, in their estimation, appeared so light and trivial an offence.

Few men existed in Granada, who did not—now, when too late—curse their pusillanimous apathy in not having effected even one struggle to save from an ignominious end, her, whose unopposed death cast a blighting, and never to be effaced, stigma upon the boasted appropriation by their country—a Spaniard's acknowledged claim to chivalry, and unswerving devotion in a woman's cause.

Many were the heavy hearts and sorrowing countenances throughout the city, on the night of the memorable day just recorded; but light would have appeared the accumulation of their regrets, when compared to the deep and never-ceasing anguish lacerating the bosom of the betrayer.

Again and again had the wretched girl determined to throw herself at the feet of her lost cousin's parents, and confessing her unparalleled baseness, humbly and in deep contrition implore pardon for her sin; but a moment's consideration of the inutility of such abject confession, roused up the proud spirit within her, and not daring to look back on the heinousness of the crime committed, she resolved boldly and without compunction to hesitate at nothing, however atrocious the means employed, so

that the all-engrossing object so long kept in view might be finally achieved.

The main obstacle to the accomplishment of Elena de Santaguella's plot was now overcome; her formidable rival had been effectually removed; Soto Mayor was far distant, and unapprized of Mariana's death; and her own treachery was necessarily unsuspected. But the most trying portion of the self-imposed task yet remained unaccomplished; and how to break the intelligence of her cousin's fate to one so devoted, required much subtlety and resolution to determine. But consideration on that point might have been spared, since it was not decreed that through her instrumentality the deceived wanderer should become acquainted with the appalling extent of his bereavement.

As day succeeded day, and Soto Mayor found himself unmolested in his mountain retreat, the irksomeness of his position became unbearable; and attributing the close incognito which Elena de Santaguella had enforced, as arising more from timidity on her part, than from the probability of danger accruing to himself, he resolved no longer to observe the silence she imposed, but determined to accost the messenger when next he approached his lurking-place with food. This was easily effected; and though the man had been carefully tutored to his task, in case of untoward circumstances occurring, and though no hint of Mariana's fate escaped his lips, still there was something in his contradictory replies and hesitating manner, that failed not to arouse an undefined presentiment of evil in the breast of his listener.

Who has not experienced that inexplicable sensation, acting as the prelude to hitherto unexpected sorrow—a dark shadow of anticipated danger, coming from we know not where, and emanating from we know not what—one of these mysteries impossible to fathom, yet still a forewarning, which occasionally *will* cross the mind, though emanating from what cause it were fruitless to conjecture!

Such was the impulse succeeding Soto Mayor's interview with Elena's messenger, which, together with a boding of misfortune

as strange as unaccountable, urged him to hurry with all speed to Granada, and satisfy himself of the welfare of her he loved, better—ay, immeasurably better than he prized his own existence.

Once having entertained a dread of something he knew not what, numerous circumstances which previously passed without challenge, rose conflictingly in his thoughts. For the first time it appeared to him strange, that not one line had he received from Mariana during his exile, while scarcely twenty-four hours were permitted to elapse without a missive from Elena reaching his hands; and the more he pondered on the circumstance, the more perplexed was he at the omission not having sooner crossed his mind.

Worn and harassed with the fatigue of his long journey, Soto Mayor reached the vicinity of the city by day-light; but not daring to enter any habitation, for fear of recognition, he was content to seek a temporary hiding-place in the adjoining valley, where, amid the thick shelter of the dark-leaved olive trees, and clustering vines, he hoped to find repose and safety until the obscurity of night might favour his appearing at the mansion of Mariana's kindred.

Four days had now elapsed since the execution; meanwhile, at the earnest entreaties of her family, the body of the poor girl had been restored to her friends, with the strict injunction from the authorities that the funeral should be conducted with all imaginable privacy, the *Corregidor* wisely dreading a public procession might act but as a torch to the mine, which they now discovered was prepared to burst forth at any moment, and, probably, would engulf themselves amid the general destruction.

The night was dark and piercingly cold; the rain plashed with a dull comfortless sound on the uneven and deserted pavement; not a star was visible in the firmament, while the ill-lighted lamps, irregularly placed at the corners of the streets, maintained but a brief unequal conflict with the gusts of wind, which found ready access through their shattered frames.

It was midnight when Soto Mayor—his garments saturated with wet, and soiled with travel—approached the well-known building. His eyes gazed piercingly towards the casement of the apartment in which he knew Mariana was accustomed to devote her time to the accomplishment of the task he had allotted her. His hair and beard were dishevelled and unshorn; deep anxiety was depicted in every lineament of his handsome countenance; and as he crept stealthily along, he ever and anon paused, as the dreadful apprehension of some withering and overwhelming calamity almost drove back the warm current of the life-blood from his heart. Rallying, however, from the painful sensation, which hovered as a pall over his hopes, he hurriedly passed on, and the next instant his form was lost amid the pillars of the colonnade of the *palacio* towards which his steps were directed.

To force back the massive iron gates—to cross the *patio*, and ascend the broad staircase, occupied less time than is necessarily expended in recording. He reached the door of the magnificent saloon where the family were accustomed to assemble; his hand was on the lock, and nerving himself to the task, with an unconscious violence, he thrust open the portal, and entered the apartment.

Utterly impossible would it be to attempt to depict what at that moment were Soto Mayor's feelings. He gazed, as though entranced, from one to another of the numerous occupants of that spacious hall, apparently seeking for explanation of the scene before him; but not a syllable did he utter; his tongue clove, as it were, to the roof of his mouth; his eyes projected fearfully from their sockets; his hands were clenched with intense agony, and he stood rooted to the spot, viewing all around, yet seemingly recognising no one. The dull stare of his glassy eye embraced the whole pageant in one fixed gaze, and was yet comprehensive of nothing. Remaining in the same attitude he assumed on his entrance, the whole appeared to him but as

one of those hideous chimeras that oftentimes haunt the pillow of a doomed and condemned wretch.

The walls and ceiling were enshrouded, and hung with heavy broad folds of black, while deep festoons of the same funereal hue of velvet, were gathered round the cornices of the apartment. The few lights distributed around, added to the awful solemnity of the scene, and aided by the dark drapery, concealed, rather than portrayed, each article as with a dismal pall.

There were about forty persons, of both sexes, seated in the apartment; all were members of the same family, and each was clad in the dismal habiliments of woe. Not a syllable was uttered; the deepest silence reigned around; but at the sudden and violent entrance of the intruder, every face was turned towards the portal, and, as the lineaments of the uninvited visitor became familiar to their vision, each brow angrily contracted, and the compressed lips and haughty gaze bespoke Soto Mayor any thing but a welcome guest.

Striving to break the spell so fearfully cast around him, the proscribed rebel, regaining, with an effort, his powers of utterance, exclaimed—"In the name of the Blessed Saints, I beseech you, explain the meaning of this dreadful scene!"

"Soto Mayor!" exclaimed a voice, nearly choked with grief, "why ask the cause of that which too well you know? Come you here to revel in the misery you have accomplished—the agony you have engendered in the breasts of all present? or come you to gloat over the result of your despicable cowardice? Why were you not here, when by one word you might have saved a life, ten thousand times more precious than the dishonoured existence which your trembling heart, and craven fear of death, so carefully shielded? Why come you here?" continued the speaker, rising from his chair, and pointing his finger towards him whom he addressed. "Speak, dastard, speak!" But obtaining no reply, the exasperated noble continued, his anger momentarily rising—"Why should we hesitate to remove

from the earth, one who has voluntarily cast himself into our power, and whose mere existence is a blot, and a damning disgrace, to all mankind? Why should we spare you," shouted Mariana's father, in a paroxysm of unbridled rage, "but to denounce you—to ensure for your contemptible body a death more painful, more lingering, and more humiliating, than was hers, whom you have so atrociously murdered?"

"By the Holy Virgin," shrieked the intruder, "again I entreat, once more I implore you, tell me what all this fearful decoration aims at?"

"Why were you not here four days since?" responded, in slow and hollow tones, his accuser. "Why came you not to offer your less than despicable self, to save your wretched victim?"

"As I hope for salvation hereafter," almost inaudibly was the reply, "I know not what you mean!"

"Again," repeated the bereaved parent, "once more I demand, why were you not here, when all expected your presence?"

"I was detained," eagerly replied Soto Mayor, his faculties in some degree recovering their accustomed acuteness, "and desired to remain absent from Granada by your own commands."

"By mine?" shouted the now infuriated Pienada.

"By *yours*—by *all* of you!" was the response.

"As certain as that I trust in the mother of God to aid me in my dying hour," vociferated Don Raymond Pienada, "so certain shall your foul blood be poured forth to the uttermost drop, to aid in this night's sad obsequies, should you dare to mock those now assembled on our awful duty."

"I mock you not," instantly replied Soto Mayor, the earnestness of his gesture plainly demonstrating his innocence of the imputed crime. "Have I not for one long month been hidden in the mountains of Santa Fé, to avoid a danger which your whole family declared to exist, but of which I am still ignorant? Did I not daily receive written directions to remain in seclusion,"

he added, drawing forth various scraps of paper from his sash, "until further suspense was worse to endure than to brave the reality of the evil itself? Am I not here, in spite of all your desires to the contrary, as proved by these instructions I now hold in my hand, and by this one in particular, which reached me not twenty-four hours since?"

"Soto Mayor has been deceived!" boldly exclaimed the unhappy mother of poor Mariana: "some deep laid scheme of treachery has been at work; for never will I credit the possibility of such atrocity existing, as that laid to the charge of him, whom I am confident loved my adored child beyond anything else the whole world could offer."

"You do me but justice, Senora," rapidly replied Soto Mayor; "but to me, all yet remains unexplained. But where is Mariana?" he added, casting his gaze rapidly round the room—"where is my promised bride?"

Not a syllable escaped any of that mournful group in reply: from one to all, the questioner turned his anxious gaze, but each, with averted countenance, continued silent.

It was evident to all assembled, that Soto Mayor's astonishment and expression of undefined fear, was unfeigned; his countenance—his every gesture, betokened evidence of an all-absorbing anxiety, that no deceptive attempt could have achieved.

Avoiding reply to the question asked, the father of the murdered girl, turning towards his assembled kinsmen, in a slow and solemn tone, addressed them.—"Senors," he commenced, "evident as it must appear to all present, as also it is manifest to myself, some most diabolical plot, yet to be discovered, has been arranged, and too successfully carried into effect, through the combinations of our enemies, by whose machinations Soto Mayor has remained in ignorance of the horrible catastrophe, which, alas! he must now learn. May the Holy Virgin support him through the ordeal! and truly do we all need Her aid in this our hour of unspeakable affliction. But, my friends, be .

it remembered, we have another, ay, and a sacred duty to perform, exclusive of solemnizing those rites we are now met to aid ; and, through the assistance to be gained by the papers before us, we may hope to hurl upon the heads of our oppressors, the sure, unfailing vigour of a Spaniard's vengeance.

" Give me the packet," he continued, suddenly confronting the intruder—" the papers !" and snatching the documents from Soto Mayor's grasp, the old man hurriedly approached a silver sconce, placed against the sombre trappings of the wall ; with trembling hands he held them to the light ; a fearful expression of bewilderment and terror crossed his countenance ; and, with a face the colour of death itself, he slowly resumed his seat, placing the objects of his searching scrutiny before him.

At that moment some one was heard to move in the apartment : a sound resembling the rustling of a woman's dress fell faintly on inattentive ears, for all were too deeply interested in the events then passing, to take further notice of the trivial interruption.

" Read aloud !" exclaimed one from among the group now pressing round the table.

The demand was instantly complied with, and the contents revealed the fact, that nearly every member of Mariana's family had, by name, been made instrumental in urging Soto Mayor's absence.

" But the handwriting ?" exclaimed the same interrogator ; " know you the writing ?"

" I do," slowly uttered the father of the murdered girl.

" And it is that of——"

" Of Elena de Santaguella," was the response.

" Of Elena de Santaguella !" burst in accents of amazement from the lips of all present ; and, as if actuated by one common impulse, every eye was turned towards the spot, where, a few moments since, their handsome kinswoman had been seated ; but they now gazed only on a vacant chair.

" This is indeed horrible !" at length escaped from the mother's lips.

“ Oh, Senora !” energetically interposed Soto Mayor, not wholly comprehending the meaning of the scene, “ oh, Senora !” he exclaimed, in heartrending accents, “ in pity keep me no longer in this terrible suspense ! Tell me, I entreat you, tell me where ~~is~~ Mariana, and wherefore do I not behold her here ?”

“ What was *once* Mariana,” solemnly answered Don Raymond Pieneda, “ reposes *there*,” pointing to the high folding doors ; “ and you shall now behold what our enemies have made her.” Wrapping his long mourning cloak around him, his head dejectingly fallen on his chest, with slow and uneven steps the bereaved father moved towards the spot he had indicated. The folding doors were instantly thrown back on their hinges, and a chapel, similarly decorated with the room they were leaving, was disclosed.

The body of the once lovely girl, clad in the usual vestments of the dead, was placed on tressels, in the aisle before the altar ; a long white drapery was extended carefully over the remains, contrasting forcibly with the sable hangings, on which blazed forth, in bold relief, the richly-embazoned escutcheons of the house of Pieneda.

The faint perfume of incense, ascended in circling wreaths from the silver vases ; two priests, in full canonicals, stood motionless by the head of the corpse, while two others were stationed at the feet, ready to commence the funeral service.

All who witnessed the solemn scene were too deeply absorbed in their own melancholy reflections, to note the presence of the unbidden guest.

The horror of the scene went nigh to bereave Soto Mayor of reason ; but when the first notes of the pealing organ rang upon his senses, he woke, as it were, from a trance, to the consciousness of a dread reality of his loss ; and uttering a cry scarcely human, rushed frantically towards the bier, and, ere his hand could be arrested, he tore from the inanimate form the snow-white shroud, exposing to the awe-struck beholders, the livid, spotted skin, the purple tongue, protruding to its utmost ex-

tremity, from between the wide-extended jaws—the dull, glazed eyeballs, burst from their bloody sockets, resting on the dead girl's convulsed and hideous countenance; while the black circle embracing her delicately-formed neck, bore ample testimony, that the loveliest of Granada's daughters had suffered a felon's death by the *Garrote*.

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Months noted in the calendar were regarded by men as time that had been, since the funeral of Mariana de Pineda, and events had occurred during the period necessary to be explained for the elucidation of the final catastrophe of the narrative.

Bowed to the dust with mental suffering, her proud spirit broken by the ineffaceable disgrace cast upon the escutcheon of their race, the fond and devoted mother of the idolized Mariana rested in peace by the side of her ill-fated child; but the head of the ancient family remained, supported by one all-engrossing feeling, one indomitable desire, towards which every action of his existence had reference, the never-ceasing, never-tiring exertion to effect all he now cared to obtain in this world—the full unchecked gratification of Revenge.

The scene which took place in the hall of her ancestors, as already detailed, so completely baffled the half-digested plans of the betrayer, that taking advantage of the opportunity offered by the attention of her kindred being drawn to the impressive scene before them, Elena de Santaguella glided noiselessly from the chamber, and from that moment all trace of her flight was lost; but judging from the turn the investigation assumed, that detection must assuredly follow on the perusal of the papers, produced by her unhappy dupe, she fled from the house without daring to waste time by possessing herself of the correspondence, for weeks carried on with the authorities, and which, when seized, left nothing wanting in proof of her unaccountable treachery—for unaccountable it then was—since none could fathom the motive instigating the miserable girl to the commission of so dark and horrible a deed.

The papers thus found afforded ample clue to the persons implicated in the bloody act; and while Soto Mayor lay for months upon his couch, his life despaired of, no exertions were wanting, no wealth spared, to obtain information so earnestly coveted by that powerful family, whose sensitive appreciation of honour had been so violently and unpardonably outraged.

The messenger employed by Elena de Santaguella had been dodged, and traced to his lurking-place; yet all had been effected with that secrecy and deep consideration ere a step was taken, that not a suspicion of the deeper tragedy being meditated, was entertained by even one of the intended victims.

So well had their measures been adopted, that the existence even of Soto Mayor was unknown to the *Corregidor* and his satellites. At first various rumours were circulated, tending to different results; but as time wore on, the deed of violence enacted on the Plaza was remembered only with a shudder, and none cared to moot a subject so repugnant to their feelings, and so dangerous to comment on, when openly alluded to.

Such was the state of affairs in Granada, as regarded Mariana's family, when in the chapel already described, two figures stood by the vault containing her remains. The gloomy embellishments yet shrouded the walls, as on the night of the funeral; but one lamp only at that period shed its fitful ray upon her tomb.

"Soto Mayor," commenced Don Raymond Pieneda, addressing his companion, "you have now, thanks to the mercy of the Holy Virgin!" and here the haughty noble devoutly crossed himself, "been preserved from the jaws of death, when naught, save all-powerful interposition, could have snatched you from the grave. But, now that the blood of long generations of ancestors flows in healthy current through your veins, the time has arrived when——"

"Enough! enough!" interrupted the other, in a deep sepulchral tone of voice, far different from his once joyous tone; "I well know and fully coincide in what you are about to utter, and

long ere this should the dark deed have been avenged, had not sickness paralyzed my arm ; but that visitation has passed away, and now the hour, so fervently prayed for during days of weakness and despair, approaches.—No aim—no end have I in life, save the attainment of *one* sole object ; and when *that* is accomplished, I trust to lie down by the side of her, whose cherished memory never by day or night ceases to enchain my thoughts.”

The countenance of the speaker, once so handsome, possessed not a trace of its former beauty. His cheeks were colourless and wan—his eyes unnaturally bright and restless, and his whole person seemed neglected, and totally uncared for. The noble chief of that ancient house, then gazing upon him, bore deep traces of acute suffering ; his hair had become perfectly white, and his frame trembled while listening to the words just uttered, yet more from suppressed passion than impaired strength.

“ Listen,” continued Soto Mayor, drawing his long *cuchilla* from his bosom, and resting it on Mariana’s tomb. “ Here, over the remains of her whom I loved, and whose remembrance I shall ever cherish with an affection impossible to be surpassed, here, I swear that never for one instant, by day or by night, save to enable me to regain strength necessary for the completion of my resolve, will I rest or withdraw, in deed or thought, from the pursuit of the murderers of my betrothed ; and never will I leave the track, until this knife has drank the foul blood of all and every one of those accursed fiends, who, directly, or in the most remote degree, were accessory to her destruction—here, in the solemn hour of midnight, by the altar of my faith, and by the tomb of my murdered bride, *I swear it !*”

“ As you have sworn, so fulfil your word !” uttered Don Raymond ; “ and when your vengeance overtakes the traitress, whose incomprehensible treachery has dealt this blow, then, ere your steel be polluted with her black heart’s dye, show her the remains of what was the remote cause of her victim’s death, and what at *that* moment will affect her own soul’s destruction here, and ensure as her reward, utter, hopeless damnation hereafter ;” and

placing a small golden casket in Soto Mayor's hand, he held all that remained of the crumbling ashes of the once Embroidered Banner.

\* \* \* \* \*

Day dawned on Granada; the tessellated pavement of the gorgeous Alhambra reflected its innumerable brilliant colours and gilded minarets in the clear waters of the fountains; and luxuriant crops, covering the wide-extending *Véga*, gave promise of an abundant harvest, while, in the far distance, the lofty summits of the snow-clad *Sierra Nevada* glittered in the beams of the rising sun.

To whatever spot the eye was turned, all was beautiful and serene; and as the brilliant orb of day burst forth in splendour, few prospects on earth could compete in grandeur with the magnificent scenery surrounding the once envied capital of the Moors.

The city was as yet silent; the inhabitants were still wrapped in repose; and difficult would it have been, when gazing on the unequalled picture, to believe that at that instant *murder* was busy within its walls; but so it was; and when the rising hum of voices bore evidence, that the thousands therein dwelling were commencing their various labours for the day, men might have been observed conversing in low tones, and with mysterious gestures, on topics seemingly as appalling as important. In some places, parties of three and four congregated together, were listening with eager attention to the recital of some dreadful occurrence, narrated by individuals apparently in possession of the facts; and as the hours wore on, and the recital of the deed spread throughout Granada, the one only subject discoursed and commented on, was the death of Don Antonio Ybanez, the Corregidor of the city.

Yes! he was dead—stabbed to the heart, and found by his servants weltering in his gore, upon his bloody couch.

Investigation was immediately set on foot, but all attempts at elucidating the mystery proved unavailing; no trace of the

murderer could be found. It was plain that the hope of plunder could not have instigated the assassin to the deed ; for though various articles of value lay strewn about the chamber, it did not appear the intruder had availed himself of such opportunity for acquiring booty. It was true the chief magistrate was otherwise than popular among his townsmen, and his dissolution in the ordinary course of nature would not probably have been regretted ; but to be suddenly cut off, in so terrible and mysterious a manner, filled all Granada with dread.

Violent and sudden as his dissolution was, the tomb had scarcely closed over the mangled body, when fresh exclamations of awe resounded through the city, on its becoming known that Don Juan Acentio had shared a similar fate ; and, as in the former case, not the vestige of a clue, whereby the murderer might be traced, could be discovered.

The mysterious and effectual manner in which the assassinations were committed, spread terror upon all, for no man could retire to rest, without apprehension that *he* himself might be the victim next selected for the unknown poignard.

Political animosity was, by some, conjectured as occasioning the atrocities so daringly perpetrated ; but when, on the following day, the mutilated corpse of Elena de Santaguella's messenger was discovered, naked, among the offal in the public plaza, surmise was at fault to find a motive for so many and such barbarous acts.

That the perpetrator was within the walls could not be doubted ; and so fearfully was the panic spreading, that, knowing not whom to trust, or whom to fear, men gazed suspiciously on each other, as though, in the friend before them, they beheld the mysterious avenger ; nor was it until the disfigured trunk of the public executioner, presenting a fearful appearance of strangulation having been inflicted, under evident circumstances of peculiar barbarity, that it was remembered that each of the victims already sacrificed, had, in some measure, been implicated in the punishment suffered by Mariana Piñeda ; and supposition

was converted into certainty, on the family of Don Jose Martinez receiving tidings of the demise of their relative by assassination, near Ronda, when returning homewards from a journey.

Unauthentic and conflicting were the incredible tales daily circulated regarding the assassin, yet still did he remain undiscovered. Suspicion naturally fell on the family of Pieneda, but was as speedily silenced, on the absence of each member of that family from the scene of slaughter, having been satisfactorily proved.

It has been stated, that the existence even of Soto Mayor was unknown, and so long a period had elapsed since his flight from Granada, that no one cared to prosecute inquiry regarding him, if, indeed, he was yet numbered among the living.

To detail the numerous assassinations perpetrated in fulfilment of Soto Mayor's dreadful oath, would be but to recapitulate atrocity upon atrocity, each more sanguinary and horrible in detail than its predecessor. Sometimes months would pass without a murder being registered; but when the people, in a measure, were beginning to recover from the horror the frequency of the deeds unavoidably entailed, fresh outrages would break out; and in every act of blood committed, the victim was recognised as one of Mariana's persecutors.

\* \* \* \* \*

There was a fête at Seville—a masked ball: innumerable lights flashed from the gorgeous halls; music, and the sweet voices of lovely women, sounded through the spacious apartments; massive goblets, filled with the sparkling juice of the luscious grape, and encircled with wreaths of choicest flowers, were displayed; love, mirth, and laughter—all were there; the luxurious banquet offered its tempting restoratives; and all that could please the eye and captivate the senses, was lavished with an unsparing hand, to render that abode the realization of a fairy dream.

“You are sad to-night,” in a low and counterfeited voice, murmured a figure, arrayed in a dark domino, his features con-

cealed behind a mask. "Why are *you* alone unhappy, while all around are seeking pleasure in this voluptuous scene?"

"You ask a question, Sir Mask," replied the person addressed, "which, were I so inclined, could readily be answered: but wherefore should *you*, a stranger, deem *me* unhappy? and, even were such the case, think you it is probable I should seek these saloons wherein to indulge my sorrow?"

"Yet such is not unfrequently done, lady," resumed the unknown, "for sometimes misery presses with so tight a clasp across the heart, that any release from solitude, and the torture of our own sad thoughts, affords relief."

"You speak as one who had suffered much," answered the lady, "and perchance, it is from a hope to banish your own reflections, that *you* likewise visit this spot. Speak."

"Perhaps, lady, other causes may have brought me hither, beyond the one you name; but *I* can conjecture none influencing *you*, save a desperate effort to banish painful retrospection."

"Who, then, do you take me for?" quickly asked the masked female. "You cannot know me?"

"It may be so," answered her companion; "and yet, methinks, I could repeat some passages in your existence, which would prove you are not *totally* forgotten."

"Say you so?" she replied, with a forced assumption of gaiety; "then to what do *you* attribute the cause of my supposed sadness?"

"Love and remorse!" almost inaudibly whispered her companion.

The figure started, as though some sudden pang shot through her brain; but instantly resuming a forced composure, she replied—"In the name of the Holy Virgin, tell me who you are?"

"That you shall soon know," was the almost-whispered reply, "but not here. I bear a message which must be delivered

to you alone; but this place is too public: follow, and I will lead where none may witness our interview."

As though spell-bound, and trembling in every limb, the veiled figure, impelled by some irresistible impulse, bowed her acquiescence; and, as the mask slowly glided through the gorgeously-decorated corridors, she noiselessly followed in his steps; when, winding their way towards one of the illuminated balconies, overhanging the Guadalquiver, the mask and his companion were hidden from the gaze of the revellers.

What passed at that interview never was divulged, beyond the statement of persons stationed below, who, attracted by the sound of gaiety within the building, tarried in the street to listen to the sweet melody of the music. By them it was asserted, that while looking towards the house, two figures, issuing from the casements, stood as if in conversation on the balconies adorning that front of the edifice. From the gestures of both parties, the subject of discourse appeared to be fraught with no trivial interest. At length the taller figure, thrusting something before the notice of the female, seemed as if appending it to her dress, at the same time casting away his mask. At that instant, a scream, fearfully shrill and awful, issuing from the spot, struck terror to the hearts of those who heard it. The taller figure then uplifted his arm; something bright as steel glittered in the moonlight; and a dull, heavy sound, as of a powerful blow, dealt on his companion's breast, followed.

The revellers forsaking the dance, rushed instantaneously in the direction of the balconies, but all was there solitary and deserted: next morning the body of a female was discovered, and consequently taken out of the Guadalquiver: a small golden box containing nothing beyond some few particles of apparent ashes, was suspended around her neck, while a sharp Spanish knife, firmly planted in the woman's heart, ended the dark catalogue of crime and consequent wretchedness of—*Elena de Santaguella*.

## GRANADA.

At Granada the travellers found abundance to occupy both their time and curiosity, and some days were spent in well-repaid expeditions, searching for novelties, without the customary value of the moments thus expended being descanted on at their usual rate of appreciation.

During that period few things worthy of observation escaped the scrutiny of the party : the elaborately-carved tombs of Ferdinand and Isabella were minutely inspected; and the sylph-like figures of our beautiful companions wandered from court to court in the ancient palace of the Moorish Kings, displaying to the wondering gaze of the astonished Spaniards a perfection of loveliness, which could not have been surpassed even by the widely-eulogised perfections of the long-since departed glories of the transcendent court of the unhappy Boabdil.

Lawyers, ecclesiastics, and mendicants, the staple, or at all events the predominating produce of Granada, and unavoidably to be encountered at every turn, met their full share of comment in the sprightly remarks of the English visitors. Neither were the many excellent pictures by the old masters passed unheeded; and, indeed, every object worthy of note which was accessible to the inquisitive research of the strangers, was assiduously visited and elaborately enlarged on. Note-books and portfolios were unceasingly called into requisition; and had the ladies put their proficiency in the graphic art to an equally-undisguised test in any fortified French city as they unscrupulously indulged in at Granada, I doubt but the whole party would ere long have found themselves domiciled in the nearest well-guarded *conciergerie*. As it happened, however, the Andalusians seemed to be attracted more by the personal perfections of the artists, than

by the correctness of their delineations, and since, fortunately, they had it not in their power to appropriate to themselves the former, they seemed to care very little as to the probable purpose and ulterior use destined for the latter.

The Marquis's anxiety to visit the Duke of Wellington's estates at Santa Fe, was not overlooked, neither were the ruins of the ancient aqueducts passed by unheeded. As I said before, everything worthy of note was sedulously sought for, and criticised to the boundless, and often-expressed incomprehensibility of the natives.

The yachts had been sent round from Malaga to Almeria, and fortunate was it that such an arrangement had been decided on, for appalling as the amount of baggage was which accompanied us to Granada, the bulk was nearly doubled on our departure from that city; and how it could have been safely escorted to Malaga by land, passed my comprehension altogether. I often marvelled what the lower orders of Spaniards could possibly have imagined we aimed at, by purchasing nearly every thing brought under our notice; for as soon as our dealers in useless merchandise, discovered our penchant for exchanging wealth for rubbish—a mania by the way which affects every English traveller—there was no scarcity of *comercientes* to be found hourly beleaguering our hotel. *Mantillas, abanicos, chinelas, zapatos*, and inutilities innumerable, flowed in hourly by direction of the ladies, while the gentlemen failed not in their exertions, by adding *samarras, cuchillos, mantas*, and *sáco de sillas*, ad infinitum, to the fast-accumulating treasures; and had we remained but a month longer, I verily believe there would have been left but little for the inhabitants wherewith to tempt our cupidity, beyond themselves, and the naked walls of their dwellings.

At length the baggage was reported as having been securely stowed on board, without loss or detriment occurring, and, accordingly, the departure of the whole *cortége*, excepting the lancers,

weighed, when Almeria, and its cotton-growing coasts, rapidly receded from our sight.

Tangier and Tetuan next claimed the notice of the voyagers, but, to my inexpressible relief, it was resolved to touch at Gibraltar on our way, there to deposit the heterogeneous collection of cumbersome items, prior to sailing for Barbary in search of more. That necessary proceeding accomplished, and the greater part of the valuables unshipped, it was deemed advisable to rest from our labours for a couple of days, at the expiration whereof we again sallied forth in high spirits, and joyously set sail for the country of the Moors.

None of the party, if I except Mr. Fitzlay, had previously visited the Moorish coast, and the curiosity of each individual was as fully, if not more so, on the *qui vive*, as when wonder-hunting at Granada.

The anxiety of the ladies to behold the wives of the Bashaws resumed its sway in full force; while the gentlemen, knowing the utter impossibility of *their* being introduced into the harems, looked forward with anticipated pleasure to an examination of the great men's horses—most foreigners labouring under the delusion, that in a Barb they are certain to find concentrated every good point, which it might be desirable a matchless quadruped should possess.

“If you really want a good thorough-bred horse, wait till you get to Barbary,” is a common but most erroneous piece of advice, repeatedly volunteered and insisted on at Gibraltar, by those who know little of the matter; whereas your object can be achieved with infinitely less trouble, and with a considerably greater probability of success, by a short trip from the Rock to the annual fair at Ronda.

On reaching the harbour of Tangier, we were speedily called upon by the British consul, from whom, as indeed was invariably the case elsewhere, on all occasions, the party experienced the greatest attention and civility, and under that gentleman's auspices the honour of an audience with the Bashaw was sought,

when, after numerous complimentary messages having been exchanged between the parties, El-Basha-Abd-Salam fixed on the following morning as an auspicious period for the interview to take place.

Meanwhile the remainder of that day was at our own disposal, and wide indeed was the new field opened for the curiosity of the travellers; and though our fair companions visited and thoroughly explored every edifice and marvel within their reach, yet were they dissatisfied at not being able to examine the interior of the Mosque—the very place of all others they declared they were most anxious to visit, not even excepting the often-talked of Harem. In this particular, however, it was impossible to accede to their inclinations; and, indeed, it was but a short time prior to our visit, that a French officer was stabbed by the Moors, for presuming to place his foot within the threshold. However, it was some amelioration to their regret, on beholding a corpse carried into a part of the building, which being opened to admit the body from the street, we could not avoid seeing. The narrow room or vault, in which they deposited the deceased, appeared dismal enough, and from whence, after placing the body, the bearers withdrew for one hour, for the purpose—so we were informed—of permitting the defunct to hold uninterrupted converse with Azrael, the angel of death.

The arrival of a string of camels, however, from Morocco, afforded the ladies as much satisfaction as anything they had hitherto witnessed, and indisputably to a stranger it is worth beholding.

In the late Colonel Denham's travels, he mentions having encountered in Africa, a body of mounted natives, clad in armour, for which assertion he obtained small credit among that class of individuals, who boast of affixing belief to nothing they do not in person behold, and as it frequently happens their understandings are impervious to comprehending even that which they look on, their general knowledge becomes necessarily circumscribed. But, as regards the armour, I assuredly beheld more than one

man forming part of the cavalcade, arrayed in complete coat of chain mail, carrying matchlock and spear of a tremendous length as offensive weapons. Where their arms are fabricated, I imagine no European knows; for though many have attempted to reach Timbuctoo, the supposed spot for solving all doubts as to the resources of the country, and the extent of ingenuity possessed by the natives, none, I believe, have as yet succeeded, if we except the single instance of a French gentleman, who affirms his wanderings to have proved satisfactory, and as no one was with him on the occasion, it would be impossible for his readers to display temerity sufficient to contradict his statements.

We had also the good fortune to witness a Jewish wedding, and were told the bride was extremely beautiful, but, for my part, I saw nothing but an immense heap of costly shawls, piled one upon another, under which variegated tumulus the fair maiden was secreted, and, moreover, guarded by a formidable-looking phalanx of old ladies. The apartment was crowded to suffocation, and in that room we were instructed the unhappy girl was doomed to remain for three days—the unpleasant incarceration forming part of the marriage ceremonial. I must not omit to mention a silver plate, which, being placed at the entrance door, every person on arriving was expected to deposit an offering therein. Where the bridegroom was, I know not, but conjecturing, in my ignorance, that he must necessarily form a somewhat important feature in the pageant, I requested he might be pointed out, whereupon, the person I addressed apprized me—with evident contempt at my ignorance—that the presence of the lady's spouse on the "happy occasion" would be deemed highly indecorous, and subversive of the usual observances of the ceremonial.

After dinner we were regaled with a Moorish concert; one man played on a rude-looking two-stringed instrument, another on a species of guitar, the third indulged in a tambourine, and the fourth exhibited on a sort of fiddle; they accompanied the

instrumental discord with their voices, and certainly produced exceedingly unpleasant sounds.

On the following day, we all proceeded in full costume to the castle, where the despotic dispenser of summary justice was waiting in due form to receive the party; the ladies, of course, were present, and by far the most attractive portion of the cavalcade, creating a greater sensation among the savages, than the usual apathy of the latter would have led us to imagine possible.

A more dirty, dilapidated building, than that occupied by the Bashaw, could not well be imagined. We were received at the entrance by a strong guard, clad in white haiks and red caps, their countenances garnished with long black beards, piercing eyes, and scowling aspect. Each man was armed with a match-lock, as long as our cavalry lances, while daggers, swords, and knives, of every size and description, were distributed among those gentry in profusion. They were principally young men.

Passing this military array, we entered a long passage, then another, and finally a third, in which last were deposited more guards, more guns, &c.; and thence we were ushered into the august presence of the great Bashaw himself.

The court, in which we found his Excellency squatted like a tailor, and reclining on piles of embroidered cushions, Fez carpets, and richly-worked shawls, was paved with black and white marble. A large fountain in the centre threw its clear water into a circular reservoir, filled with gold fish, while refreshing rills, bright as crystal, gushed forth from behind the many lofty pillars that supported the beautiful trellis-work of the piazza, which wholly surrounded this open hall of audience. There were black slaves in abundance; and brilliant black eyes gazed at us from a network of gilded wire, whence we were subjected to the criticisms of the ladies of the harem. Then we had fine speeches, spluttered by a fat interpreter, while the Bashaw smiled, stroked his beard, showed his teeth like a mastiff, and then applied both hands to his neck, as if searching for the proper spot for the bow-string. These, we were told,

were indications of pleasure, though certainly they did not convey that impression to my mind.

El-Bashaw-Abd-Salam was an extremely fine-looking man, apparently about forty-five years of age—immense eyes, and a good and rather intelligent countenance. His person was enveloped in the white haik of the country, similar to those worn by his guards, with the sole difference that his garments were of a finer texture than was the case with the others. He appeared highly gratified at the compliments paid him by the Marquis through means of the dragoman, but at length becoming exceedingly tired, he asked permission to view the stables, which, after a profusion of smiles, bows, and inclinations of the body, from every person then present, was at length granted, whereupon his Excellency went to his wives, while our party went to his horses.

Great was the disappointment occasioned to the ladies by this arrangement, as they had calculated, to a certainty, on an introduction to the possessors of those brilliant orbs, which we beheld sparkling through the lattice-worked wires; but the case was irremediable; the interpreter assured his Excellency, he had endeavoured to obtain permission for the female portion of the English visitors to enjoy the honour of an interview, but the boon sought for had been instantaneously, and not in the most polite manner imaginable, refused. All this may, or may not have been, since the conversation carried on between the potentate and the dragoman was conveyed in Arabic, which again was, by the latter, translated to Mr. Fitzlay in Spanish, and by his aid communicated to his Excellency and the ladies in English; consequently, it was impossible for any of the party to ascertain what really passed in the Arabic tongue, beyond what the party using it was pleased to communicate.

In what the difficulty consisted, I am ignorant; but that some paramount obstacle effectually put a check to our fair friends' anxiety for an interview, was made sufficiently apparent. However, good-humouredly making up their minds to hope for

different success on reaching Tetuan, they wisely desisted from bemoaning over what was inevitable, and gladly accompanied us to inspect the Governor's stud.

We were accordingly handed over to the safe keeping of half-a-dozen as cut-throat-looking gentlemen, divested of any superabundance of clothing, as the greatest admirer of nature in its unsophisticated state, might desire to behold. Onward we went, our new acquaintances talking at the very highest pitch of their voices, but on what subject their oratorical powers were called into play, it is not in my power to explain.

At length we halted before a wretched-looking out-house, without a roof; the walls were composed of rough stones, cemented with mud; and in this unsightly building, we were given to understand, his Excellency's quadrupeds had their abode. At a signal from our escort, the gates were unfastened from within, and, stepping over a considerable quantity of mud and filth, we entered the guarded enclosure. This walled-in piece of ground, for no other denomination did it deserve, was about seventy feet long, by forty broad, having unplanned rafters overhead, around parts of which the small tendrils of some wild vines clung.

In this place, the brush of the painter, and the broom of the stable-boy, were alike unknown; the only thing to which the attention of the grooms was drawn, appeared to be the pegs whereunto cords were affixed, for the purpose of tethering the horses. There were seven in all, each having an amulet, or charm, suspended round his neck, and depending from the throat; these talismanic spells were sewn in small linen bags, shaped like a crescent; and whatever advantages they might have bestowed on the quadrupeds, good "grooming," and "freedom from blemish," certainly formed no portion of the list. The horses were mostly under fifteen hands high, and, though only in two instances, very old, all had been clumsily fired in various modes and places; yet in Barbary, this is not so much resorted to as a remedy, as it is adopted as a preserva-

tive against future contingencies ; hence it happens that horses are frequently met irretrievably blemished, though guiltless of having suffered from any of the ills, for alleviating which that mode of treatment is in England resorted to.

I remarked one little compact chesnut from among the lot, which at home might possibly have fetched from forty to fifty pounds ; but the others presented as miserable a collection of animals, as could have been called from any cab-stand in London.

Two of these long-legged chargers had been presented to Abd-Salam by the munificence of the Sultan, and it was only on beholding others of similar appearance at Tetuan, that we became apprized of the cause of so useless a stud. This when explained, however, readily dispelled astonishment on our parts, save that which arose from the very natural wonder as from whence the Sultan could have picked up such awful brutes to bestow on his favoured lieutenants.

It would seem that when desirous of replenishing his coffers, the monarch is accustomed to dispatch his worst horses as presents to his most faithful servants, and in return for which highly prized condescension, the said faithful servants—ever having the bastinado present to their imaginations—find themselves under the compulsory obligation not only of finding room for the brute in their stables, but at the same time imperatively called upon to proffer for the acceptance of their most bountiful lord and master, a sum of gold, amply sufficient for effecting the purchase of as many animals of similar description, as would supply all the fox kennels in the United Kingdom for a twelvemonth.

Great was our astonishment on beholding the Bashaw's stud. The horses were picquetted at some distance from each other, and betrayed no visible token of animation. How they might have borne themselves and their riders outside the stable we were not permitted to judge ; but if any conclusion might be drawn from their appearance within the building, I opine a sharp rowel would have proved more beneficial than a blunt one to whom-

ever might have been destined to bestride them. Be that as it may, His Excellency, as a matter of course, as likewise did every one of the party, expressed unqualified approbation and delight; and having left proofs of our satisfaction, somewhat more substantial than verbal commendation, with those having charge of the ill-favoured looking creatures, we withdrew for the purpose of witnessing the evolutions of the body guard, which, by the Bashaw's commands, were directed to assemble on the sands for the inspection of the Marquis.

The horses belonging to these warriors varied from fourteen to sixteen hands in height; there were between thirty and forty men out on the occasion, all of whom apparently came and departed exactly in accordance with their own personal convenience, without any reference whatever to aught beyond their private inclination; the long matchlock was the chief and evidently favourite weapon; and no part of the performance afforded them such satisfaction, as, when galloping at full speed, they suddenly pulled up dead short, thereby throwing the animals on their haunches, whereupon pointing their long guns upwards they fired in the only direction where it was utterly impossible the discharge could wound or destroy any one, even had they wished it.

There was very little difference between the horses we then looked at on the sands and those we had previously inspected, since, for the most part, they were sadly blemished, and their appearance indicated but little stamina or bone. I must admit, however, their pace when charging was swift; but the distance they galloped was so extremely limited, as to preclude the possibility of judging what the real qualities of the horses might have been. These advances, without the slightest attempt at variation, were repeated again and again, when, finding there was nothing more to be expected by longer gazing at the dusky-visaged heroes, His Excellency and the whole party executed a variety of attempts illustrative of Oriental salutation, on the completion of which we withdrew, and in due time set sail for Tetuan, which we made in about three hours, when we came to

anchor off the castle of El Capitan Hash-Hash—a miraculous building, divested of door, or doorway, situated on the beach, and some miles distant from the town.

The first thing was to apprise the consul of the arrival of His Excellency, in order that suitable arrangements might be made for conveying the ladies to Tetuan, prior to which being effected it was judged expedient they should remain on board ; but not deeming such restriction necessary for the protection of the gentlemen, and attracted by the apparently-favourable description of country surrounding El Capitan Hash-Hash's tower, Lord Ashdale, Mr. Fitzlay, and myself, determined to ascertain by practical observation, whether we could not obtain a brace or two of red-legged partridges for the ladies' appropriation.

Taking our guns, therefore, together with four rifles for the men, as protection in case of need, we stepped into the gig and pulled for the shore. There we found the Vice-Consul with a miserable set of quadrupeds, which latter were intended to carry the party to Tetuan ; but as it was somewhat late in the day for the ladies to commence a journey, the expedition was postponed until the following morning. Meanwhile, we proceeded in quest of game ; but prior to commencing walking up the birds—for dogs we had none—Lord Ashdale wisely suggested the propriety of extracting the ancient Moor from his fortified dwelling, for the purpose of obtaining his permission for sporting over his manor.

In brief time El Capitan Hash-Hash descended by a rope from the summit of his fastness, like a monkey at the Zoological Gardens, attracted by a display of nuts, and most nimbly did he perform the journey.

This guardian of the coast was an old man, extremely short in figure, with a long grey beard, descending to his girdle. He was clothed in the invariable—I was on the point of writing *white*, but that was not the *exact* colour of the vestment—haik of the country. An immense turban surmounted an equally-enormous

head, in which was placed two fierce restless black eyes, by n means prepossessing when gazed at.

This chief of the customs—or whatever branch of state h personated—spoke, and understood a few words of Spanish, b which means he was enabled to comprehend the nature of ou request, when, having crossed his hand with a small piece o gold, he instantaneously discovered that no objection whatever to our shooting could possibly arise. Not so, however, seemed to think another antiquated denizen of the coast; for scarcely had we turned our backs on El Capitan's castellated mansion, than the irascible individual came rushing towards us, evidently labouring under no trifling degree of excitement. His countenance betrayed strong symptoms of disapprobation, and while with one hand he held up the tail of his garment, in no very elegant attitude, with the other he flourished an old scimitar, with which he made various efforts to execute something assimilating to Angelo's sword exercise.

This gentleman was evidently in the possession of much information, which, with a generosity highly commendable, he appeared anxious to impart for our special benefit; but, as the new comer was unable to utter a syllable of any language, save Arabic, and since none of us could interpret a particle of his harmonious tongue, our intercourse, at length, dwindled down to a style of communication much in vogue during a Christmas pantomime. In due course his gestures became sufficiently expressive, as to leave no doubt on our minds that the presence of the irate mortal bade fair to put an end to our excursion; but, having a lively faith in the powers of a metallic currency, we tried the effect of a two dollar piece on the barbarian. Instantly he became an altered man, and, having delivered an umbrella into his charge (which curious piece of mechanism he instantly squatted down to examine,) he paid not the slightest attention to our further proceedings. Several Moorish women also crowded round us, impelled by curiosity to look on the faces of the strangers, a compliment which we had it not in our power to

return, as they kept their countenances so completely shrouded—excepting one eye each—as to preclude the possibility of gaining even a glimpse of their features. They talked and laughed with great volubility one with another, but, unhappily, not a syllable could we comprehend. The country was covered with a dwarf-oak, and sharp prickly shrubs; the latter of which, penetrating our clothes at every step, caused us to lift our legs after the fashion of horses affected with stringhalt; nevertheless, we persevered in our task, and Lord Ashdale was in luck, for, after beating about the sandhills for a very short time, he bagged two brace of partridges, while neither Mr. Fitzlay nor myself got a single shot. However, we obtained for our pains a most picturesque view, and the distant town of Tetuan gave indications of possessing attractions which wofully diminished on closer scrutiny.

The next morning the sun beamed forth in all its splendour, and in high spirits our beautiful companions were quickly seated on the miserable half-starved animals destined to convey them to the city, for attaining which object, an equal amount of physical force and skill was required to keep them on their legs as was of necessity expended in the endeavour to urge the poor donkeys onward.

I will not here descant on the fearful accumulation of filth which meets the traveller at every yard of his progress through the abominations of the dirtiest of all villanous towns—Tetuan. The pavement—if such it can be called—strewn with defilements and rubbish, was sunk full a foot deep in black putrid mud—while the perfumes—but suppose I leave the subject, gentle reader, and hurry forward in quest of something more sweetly refreshing to the olfactory nerves than to my sense, at least, seemed the gratuitous inhalation of the “Bouquet de Tetuan.”

As usual, the Consul rivalled in kindness all we had previously experienced from the diplomatic gentlemen, similarly engaged at Cadiz, Malaga, and elsewhere; and had it been in our host's power to have made his house four times the size it was, for the purpose of accommodating the whole of our party, he

would indisputably have done so ; but that being out of the question, the ladies and his Excellency took up their abode under shelter of his friendly roof, while the rest of the travellers were located in different dwellings appertaining to the Jews.

The mansion, whereof a part was allotted for my use, was the property of the Consul's interpreter, and some extremely-pretty relatives the old gentleman retained in his house. During the time I was their lodger, the family were incessantly employed in distilling brandy from figs, which when accomplished, they assured me was instantaneously purchased, and ravenously swallowed by the Moors. I cannot say I actually beheld those gentlemen in the act of imbibing the forbidden liquor, but *certainly* there were numbers of them continually passing in and out of the building, without any apparent motive whatever for so doing.

The state of the streets, as I before said, was such as to render a transit from one part of the town to another on foot utterly impracticable, we were accordingly compelled to put the services of a donkey in requisition, and as there was but one ass the first day available for our use, the Consul's dinner was well nigh spoilt before we could all be gathered at his board.

The occurrences of the next morning were destined to atone for the severe disappointment experienced by the ladies at Tangier, in not having obtained entrance to the harem, since at their desire the Consul—on requesting an audience from the Bashaw, in favor of his Excellency, and those who accompanied him—expressly solicited the indulgence sought in behalf of our beautiful countrywomen ; and delighted were Lady Blanche and Lady Mary, when informed their request would be acceded to.

As had been the case at Tangier, so at Tetuan were we clad *en grande tenue*, and the number of asses having been considerably augmented for the occasion, we proceeded in great state to the Moorish castle, where the Bashaw Mahomet Hash-Hash had signified his intention of giving audience to the Marquis. I know not if Hash-Hash, the governor in the castle, and Hash-

Hash, the governor in the tower, were relatives ; but if such was the case, I should infer, from their different style of living, that he by the coast must have been decidedly the younger brother, while the other inherited the entailed property.

I must not forget to mention, that immediately preceding the start of our asinine cavalcade, the Bashaw sent two sheep, several dozen fowls, and eggs innumerable, as a present to his Excellency ; and sorely perplexed was the Marquis, first to know how to dispose of the eatables, and next in what way to return the compliment. The first difficulty was, however, soon disposed of, by the judicious proposition, emanating from the Consul's cook, that the liberal donation had as well be dressed for dinner ; a proposal immediately carried ; but as to rendering a suitable return for the delicate attention, that was deferred for future cogitation.

The Consul, his dragoman, and a Jewish woman, who spoke Spanish and some English, destined to act as interpreter to the ladies, accompanied us in our progress.

The guards were much finer men, and considerably more numerous, than at Tangier, but our reception was in style similar, though in splendour superior to that which we before experienced. The numerous courts through which we were ushered, had each, at least, one fountain in the centre, while numerous rills of clear water were made to glide down the marble channels fashioned in the tessellated pavements ; the rooms were furnished with cushions innumerable, of costly manufacture, and so disposed round the apartments as to afford excellent substitutes for beds.

On entering the room where the Bashaw was seated on a pile of magnificently covered pillows, strewn over rich carpets and embroidered rugs of various descriptions and brilliant colours, to our great astonishment, we beheld a four-posted bedstead erected in the centre of the apartment, a present, we were informed, which had lately been presented, but the directions for using which European article of luxury had evidently failed in

reaching Barbary, since the guards and courtiers, and even the great man himself, frequently cast a suspicious glance towards the cumbrous fabric, in evident expectation of beholding it pourtray some development symbolical of its use; a richly embroidered quilt was thrown across the bed, and the sheets were so folded as to pourtray a profusion of gold and silver embroidery, with which they were decorated. There were three French clocks in the room, and Fez carpets in abundance. Chairs were brought for our use, and nothing could exceed the civility of our host's speeches, at least in so far as the Jew translated them for our edification.

Presently, a long train of black slaves made their appearance, carrying on their heads huge brass trays, on which were deposited earthenware dishes, each of sufficient magnitude for holding a baron of beef. In these gigantic receptacles were piled up cakes and sweet-meats, of varieties too manifold to enumerate, and of all which the party was expected to partake. But what attracted our astonishment most, was the introduction of two Britannia-metal tea-pots, into which one of the officers deposited a quantity of tea and sugar together, and having well shaken both utensils, they were consigned to the charge of a black attendant, who immediately filled them with boiling-water, and then poured the mixture into small cups.

No less than seven times was this fearful compound handed round, and at each circuit of the tea-tray, the interpreter, in most forcible language, assured us, nothing could be construed into insult more readily than would have been the act of allowing this endless decoction to pass untasted.

With exemplary and praiseworthy patience, his Excellency submitted to the infliction, and, in all probability, the gallant old soldier never imbibed so much bad tea and sugar, during his whole existence, as the etiquette of the Tetuan court forced him to swallow on that occasion; but when the preparations were put in practice for administering an eighth dose, human forbearance could tolerate the cruelty no longer, and, heedless .

of the Bashaw's grandeur, and what to all of us was of far greater import, the ladies' presence, the Marquis let fall a fearful English oath, to the effect, that if he drank any more hot water to please the Emperor of Morocco himself, he most fervently hoped he might spend an unlimited period, in a place supposed to be tolerably well frequented, though, by common consent, seldom openly alluded to in polite society.

Fortunately, Mahomet Hash-Hash in no degree comprehended the meaning of the Marquis's sudden outbreak; but on the interpreter stating it was an ebullition expressive of gratification at the super-excellent flavour of the beverage, the dispenser of the bastinado smiled complacently, and, to the great relief even of the fair visitors, he waved his hand, and the vile Britannia metal tea-pots, and all appurtenances thereunto belonging, were rapidly hurried from the apartment.

Not with the tea-things, however, did our miseries vanish, for in a few seconds another slave entered the room, bearing on his head a pitcher of cream, which was immediately handed round, in its pure unadulterated state, and forced on the palate of each visitor.

All things must have an end; and soon after the latter unwelcome libation, a termination was put to the tiresome interview, after which, the ladies, in accordance with the promise made to the interpreter, were placed in the care of the Jewish woman, with whom they proceeded towards the harem, while our steps were directed to the stables.

There we found only twelve horses, comprising the Bashaw's stud, and, as was the case at Tangier, they were all of an inferior description. One old white fellow, was pointed out as the most recent mark of the Sultan's favour; and I very much doubt whether the Bashaw did not fervently hope it may prove the last. The animal was indisputably fourteen or fifteen years of age, and bore every symptom of having once been a noble creature, but that must have been in days long gone by; for, at the time I write of, he more resembled the remains of a

broken-down cab-horse, than a charger destined to bear the weight of the most despotic power in the province. The stables were roofed, and amulets were in as much request as at Tangier. The treatment of the horses appeared in nowise different; racks or mangers they had none; grooming was out of vogue, but the animals' tails were carefully gathered into thick knots. Generally speaking, their heads were finely shaped, and well put on, and had the lower extremities borne any similarity in beauty to their large and intelligent-looking eyes, they would have appeared to far greater advantage than was the reality.

Such were the animals I beheld in Barbary, and it may readily be concluded, if the Bashaws were unable to boast the possession of studs superior to those shewn, it is far from probable any less exalted personages could be more favoured. The fact is, the best horses are not permitted to leave the interior; and, although much has been said regarding the beauty of those in the neighbourhood of the coast, I have never had the good fortune to behold them, notwithstanding having visited the country often.

It was now time to return for our fair companions; and not a little astonished were we at hearing from their beautiful lips reiterated expressions of intense disappointment on the result of their interview; for instead of beholding the lovely captives, which their imaginations had for so long a time been actively occupied in creating, they were ushered into the presence of three exceedingly obese ugly old women, who, immediately on their approach, made demonstration of an uncontrollable desire to strip their visitors of every portion of apparel, seemingly with a view towards ascertaining how European ladies were "made up."

This description of welcome naturally enough disgusted the travellers; and as nothing more fascinating than the "wied sisters" surrounding them appeared likely to make an appearance, they escaped with what expedition they could command from so uninviting a presence, and detailed to our sympathiz-

ing condolence the expressions of their unqualified vexation. Whether there were any others in the harem less repulsive in appearance than the three to whom the ladies were introduced, they had, of course, no means of ascertaining. We were, therefore, fain to return to our donkeys, and retrace our way to the Consul's habitation.

Vexed by the discomfiture of their expectations, both Lady Mary and Lady Blanche hastily recollected it was full time they returned to England, and, indeed, they unexpectedly, and with great suddenness, marvelled exceedingly how they could possibly have, for so lengthened a period, deferred their departure from the strange countries wherein, for some three or four weeks, they had wandered.

What the pressing necessity for their hastily-formed resolution may have originated in, mattered very little, since go they would ; and as a lady never ought to be contradicted, and a pretty woman never is, their commands were immediately put in progress of observance, by re-embarking as soon possible, and shaping our course towards the Rock.

I had hoped, during the short voyage to Gibraltar, that a change might have come o'er the fancies of our captivating friends, but in that I was bitterly mistaken, for no sooner had we landed, and the ladies escorted to the convent, than active preparations were put in practice to expedite arrangements for the homeward voyage.

"*Acceptissima semper munera sunt, auctor quæ pretiosa facit,*" said our old friend Ovid ; and truly so thought I, when listening to the kind expressions of regret at parting, uttered by those two beautiful beings, when I called to bid them farewell ; but why linger on the recollection of parting with those who occasionally *may* be met with, and whom to be acquainted with, though but for a few fast fleeting days, intuitively leads us to admire and regard ? Parting with those whom we respect and appreciate, always engenders regret ; and, for my own share, I acknowledge a bitter antipathy to those jingering farewells,

*really* emanating from the heart more than from a merely outward semblance of interest in the separation ; it is a theme which I, for one, care not to dwell on ; and as the well-appointed yachts, gliding from their moorings, carried homeward the party with whom, for the last few weeks, I had enjoyed so enviable a companionship, I felt as though I was losing long-tried valued friends, instead of being separated from acquaintances, whose society I had participated in but for a few days only.

My ruminations, however, were not destined to remain of long continuance, for I had scarcely advanced a dozen paces, on my way towards my quarters, when I encountered Mr. Fitzlay, whom I certainly imagined had accompanied the rest of the party on their return voyage.

“ Oh, not a bit of it,” replied the gentleman, in answer to my expressed supposition to that effect, “ quite the reverse, my dear fellow, I assure you, and as indeed you see ; and, between you and I, it would not be quite so convenient at the present moment were I to make my appearance in London ; I might create a sensation certainly, but it would be one which I fancy might shake me to the very centre.”

“ Centre of what ? ” I inquired, not fully comprehending his meaning.

“ Why—centre of all the Jews, money-lenders, and bill-brokers,” answered Mr. Fitzlay, apparently much amused at the probable reception he might receive if handed over to their tender mercies ; “ but, in earnest, it would be most particularly inconvenient to myself, were I to appear to-morrow, or, indeed, for the next day or so, in the metropolis. By the way, my dear fellow, did you ever have money-dealings with the Israelites ? ”

“ I should hope not,” I replied, quickly, in pious horror at the bare idea of such a misfortune.

“ Then I’d advise you never *to*,” rejoined Mr. Fitzlay, “ it’s far too exciting to be pleasant ; and, between you and I, *that’s* the reason I don’t return to England at present. However, I

hope and trust all matters will soon be squared ; but, at any rate, it would not do to go home *now*."

" You imagine, then, you might meet with a cool reception from the money-lenders ?" I inquired.

" Anything but that," replied my friend, " I fancy my reception would be warm enough : not one of the twelve tribes but would send a representative to welcome my approach, and so constant would they prove in their attentions, as to render their persevering assiduities actually oppressive. But after all," he continued, " my pecuniary affairs are not in so very shattered a state as to justify much uneasiness : it is merely a matter of arrangement with the gentlemen of the long robe, their endeavours being pointed towards saving me from much exorbitant usury, practiced during my matriculation at college. Well, '*nil desperandum*,' they have not done me much harm yet, nor do I think it probable they ever will ; for, in sooth, I have had fair warning in the case of an ancient relative of my own."

" How was that ?" I asked anxiously, in the hope of hearing a last anecdote related by the only remaining one of the late delightful party—" Pray let me have the story ?"

" With all my heart," replied my obliging companion, " and much good may it do you. For myself, I can safely aver, the remembrance of it has many a time turned my steps from the threshold of the bill-discounter's door ; but, come and dine at the club ? when, if you still wish it, I will relate the tale, exactly as the old gentleman told it to me."

These preliminaries being in due time satisfactorily carried out, Mr. Fitzlay and myself replenished our glasses, and having again reminded me of his intention to give the narrative in his uncle's own words, commenced the story of—*My first and only Loan*.

# MY FIRST AND ONLY LOAN.

**“ Alas ! how light a cause may move  
Dissention between hearts that love.”**

*The Light of the Harem.*



## MY FIRST AND ONLY LOAN.

“ALLOW me to enquire,” quoth my masculine parent, with as small a proportion of the gentle and urbane about his manner as those who dwelt in his presence were accustomed to witness—“Allow me to enquire, who, do you imagine, is to pay your debts?”

Now it so happened, strange as the coincidence may appear, that this very selfsame identical question—ay, and couched in similar terms, had been engrossing my innermost thoughts for a considerable time prior to my respected sire having expressed a wish to be enlightened on that particular point.

Every one will vouch for the truth of a marvellous distinction existing between putting a query, and having to solve the enigma. Such was my case at the present time, and, had it been feasible, I should have much preferred interrogating the questioner, to being compelled to furnish a reply, when, in fact, I was ignorant what response to offer.

At it was, the matter was the more difficult, since, for the life of me, I could not furnish the most distant clue to the unravelment of the mystery. Not that my ignorance was to be attributed to want of study, or paucity of cogitation on the subject, since I had been daily put in mind of the difficulty of my task, by the appearance of sundry papers ruled with red ink, whereon words and figures were strangely mingled together.

Had I been catechised touching the feasibility of starting a railroad from Brighton to Paris, or of carrying the Thames Tunnel to the Wye, I do not hesitate to affirm I should have been able to advance an instantaneous and, I trust, satisfactory adjustment of the difficulty; but the case was a very different one indeed; and as the indication of the governor's visage evinced a determination not to be satisfied, be my reply what it may, I wisely held my peace, hoping that the old gentleman, finding it useless to interrogate me further, might eventually feel disposed to make answer himself. Nor was I far from right; for having twice again essayed to extract the desired knowledge, my worthy and much-respected papa shrewdly added, "I suppose you fancy *I'm* to pay your rascally debts, don't you?"

Another coincidence! thought I. Well! it certainly *was* singular, and very singular, truly; for I should let the reader know, that whenever the most distant gleam of extrication from my difficulties presented itself to my agitated mind, somehow or other it was invariably identified with a vision of the parental cheque-book, and anticipation of the governor's lecture. But then again—"those rascally debts," as my affectionate relative termed them. Was not *that* strange? such a reciprocity of sentiment between father and son! "Rascally debts!" Why, my generous-hearted parent could not by human possibility have better expressed my own sentiment, as regarded the estimation in which I held the said liabilities, had he been able to probe into the most secret recesses of my heart.

"Rascally debts!" Well, so they were, to all intents and purposes, as far as my estimation of their virtues went; but, unfortunately, to be effectually consigned to the shades below, it was necessary they should become defunct, and the bills in question had latterly evinced most unequivocal evidence of existence.

But whether dead or alive, thought I, it matters little now; for my father having openly avowed his detestation of the whole genus collectively, and without one single exception being taken

in their favour, not a vestige of doubt remained on my mind but he would speedily desire his lawyer to dispose of the whole collection voluminously piled on my table.

"You think *I'll* pay your debts, I suppose?" again asked my irascible companion; and as the inquiry then put appeared in the light of what lawyers term a "leading question," I answered, as I concluded was expected, with the small monosyllable, "Yes."

"Then you'll find yourself most wofully mistaken," rejoined my father, thus betraying his solicitude for my extrication from difficulties; and having violently pulled the bell, for no apparent purpose than to prove the strength of the rope appended to it, he stalked out of the room by one door, at the same instant the servant obeyed the summons by walking in at another.

"Several persons have been inquiring for you, sir," said my domestic, when reaching my own apartments.

"Not the least doubt of *that*," thought I; therefore entering my chamber, with the antiquated resolve of reaching a decided conclusion as to the best plan of proceeding, and for the hundredth time I turned over in my mind every probable and improbable measure, likely to bring about a liquidation of what commercial men term "liabilities."

I should previously have mentioned, that although the sums owing did not amount in value to the total of the national debt, yet was the aggregate sufficiently alarming to a boy of eighteen; since, by some mismanagement at Oxford, or carelessness of my affairs, or, probably, from both and other reasons combined, I had ample evidence to prove, that two thousand pounds would not cover the demands looked for by my creditors; and although I well knew, that eventually a large entailed property would be mine, yet was I equally convinced, that, at the time I write of, I was not in possession of a five-pound note, beyond what my father chose to advance; and by this time, I trust, it has been made sufficiently clear, the worthy gentleman possessed but

small inclination to favour me with an addenda to my already received and expended allowance.

What was to be done? The people must be paid, or I should actually be mobbed in the streets; and to get rid of their detested importunities, I would willingly have assigned my new cab and saddle horses to the hammer. But what would they produce? Nothing—or, at least, tantamount to nothing, when compared to what I owed—a mere drop in the ocean—a bagatelle.

How I came to squander such a sum, it would not be easy to explain; but that such *was* the case—at least that the tradespeople said so—I had no reason to discredit.

Further application to my father was now wholly out of the question; not that the payment of treble the sum could, in the slightest degree, have interfered with his comforts, or called forth that forerunner of misery, yclept retrenchment. Nothing of the sort; but from the mistaken idea of letting the offence carry its own punishment, he entailed annoyances on us both, as by perusal may hereafter be perceived.

The predicament in which I was placed was anything but an enviable one, and where to look for help I knew not. Uncles, aunts, cousins, of all sizes and degrees, I possessed in abundance; but what would they say, if the heir to the rich man of the family were to ask for the loan of a couple of thousand pounds? Would they lend it?—not they. Some, possibly, had it not, while those who possessed the power, would indisputably marvel that one so young should have proved so extravagant; others would affirm, they made it a rule never to countenance or connive at a child's opposition to the paternal commands; while many, by way of saving themselves the trouble of framing excuses, would have laughed in my face, and persisted in calling it "a hoax."

One person there was, however, who would have parted with the last trinket from her jewel-box, rather than I should suffer a moment's pain, and that person—need I write it—was my

mother. Had the sum required been twenty-thousand instead of two, that dear and beloved parent would have disbursed it without a moment's hesitation ; but, alas ! she possessed no control over the pecuniary department, independent of her husband ; and for what purpose, therefore, should I render her miserable by a detail of grievances, which I was confident she had not the power to remedy ?—Assuredly not. Since the calamity could not be averted by lamentations over my bad fortune, it was just as well not to annoy others with my woes.

I had been told of money-lenders, and I had read advertisements inserted through the kindness of that disinterested and most praiseworthy race, but where they dwelt, or what might be their dress, manners, and language, was to me as a sealed volume ; but according to the turn my affairs were taking, circumstances bid fair for speedily furnishing an opportunity of making their acquaintance ; and recollecting that the greatest friend I possessed—my relations excepted—was then stationed with his regiment at Hounslow, the bright idea of requesting his sage assistance was quickly followed up by putting the notion in practice. No sooner had the fancy of seeking advice from Henry Harrington taken possession of my mind, than I resolved to push the experiment to the test, and accordingly I was soon cantering down Rotten Row, *en route* to the abode of my intended mentor.

Where my old friend Henry picked up his information, I cannot venture to explain, but possibly there may be some intuitive link connecting that branch of the state of which he was a member, with the dispensers of wealth, for to my surprise and pleasure, I found my ally perfectly *au fait* at all the technical terms designating ruin, under the appellation of bills, annuities, reversions, and post obits.

At first I thought Harrington had entirely mistaken his profession, so easily did he enter into the pros and cons connected with borrowing, and such extraordinary zeal did he evince in his endeavours to enlighten my rather clouded understanding

on the matter; but all was eventually explained, though but partially understood; one thing, however, was plain enough viz., that my friend was as "hard up" as myself, and, as far as regarded supplies from home, somewhat similarly placed.

Here then was a coadjutor ready, ay, and most willing to proceed to any extremity, in order to gain possession of a required sum; and having assured me in a confidential strain that Captain Longhair of his own regiment, "*did them*" out of a cool five thousand the previous week, he requested me to set my mind perfectly at ease, seeing that not a doubt existed but that he could certainly compass anything that so slow a fellow as the Captain had achieved.

Harrington's soothing words had a marvellous effect in setting my agitated mind at rest. By his account I should speedily be in possession of a sum of money amply sufficient to settle all my debts; the duns would be for ever driven from my sight, and those "rascally bills," as my considerate parent justly styled them, would be paid off; when being paired to their respective receipts, they might rest undisturbed at the bottom of some bureau for ever.

The individual on whom the honour of borrowing was to be conferred, dwelt in a short narrow street at the West End of London—not that he cared for the gaieties therein enacting, but peradventure for the greater facility the *locale* afforded for watching and decoying into his net, those whom he judged likely to suit his views.

On knocking at the door belonging to this worthy member of society, the wooden obstruction moved slowly back, propelled by a cord pulled by some person within. Not a soul did we see on entering the passage, which contained three doors, one being on either side, and the third ajar in our front.

"Come in!" squeaked a small voice from the open apartment, as crossing the threshold the street door closed upon us. "Come in!" Thus admonished we advanced towards the room from whence the sound of doubtful welcome issued, and soon found

our conjectures not ideal—at least one wretched mortal tenanted the place, and to none other could so dismal a voice have appertained.

It was a square apartment, or more properly speaking, a closet, and so contracted were its dimensions, that twelve persons could not possibly have been accommodated with seats within its precincts: the walls might or might not have received a coat of paint or whitewash in the primeval days of the mansion's grandeur, but at the epoch I speak of, nothing but mouldy plaister and long streaks of dirt and damp met the offended eye. There was neither bureau or shelves, no, not even a few law books scattered about—nothing to indicate study or research, if I except the thin "tenement of clay," who perched on a high stool behind an enormous stand of ink, sedulously plied his labours in copying an apparently interminable deed, having for its purport the transfer of a beautiful property from the hands of a spendthrift into those of one of the numerous gang, who, letting out their money at nearly cent. per cent., live and thrive on the folly and vices of inexperience. I've often pondered whether such ill-gotten wealth eventually adds to the prosperity of those in whose favour it is amassed; and from the instances I am acquainted with, I think it may be fairly stated, that the third generation become as poor and penniless as was the first, prior to the development of the founder's aptitude for calculations.

But to return. The creature perched upon the apex of the elevation, presented as ungainly an appearance as could well be imagined; what his age might have been none would have been bold enough to surmise; but that he was exceeding spare in flesh, and most particularly dirty in person, was beyond all manner of question; in short, the pride taken by him in the study of costume—if indeed such a weakness ever engrossed his attention—was long since numbered among the things "that had been," while his evident aversion to soap was openly portrayed on each lineament of his face. His hair was long and black, and suffered to luxuriate in wanton—not curls—but rat's

tails, in whatever direction that ornament to the human head chose to wander, or according to whatever new arrangement was given by the frequent insertion of his bony fingers through the tangled masses.

From the position in which he sat leaning on his desk, it would have been difficult to guess his height, had he not ever and anon stretched forth his long skinny limbs, as though to ease them from their confined posture ; after which, having extended his arms, and expanded his mouth and hands to their utmost length, he re-gathered the long folds of his carcass, and with renewed vigour betook himself to his daily task—copy—copy—copy. Such was the sole and monotonous employment in which the money scrivener's clerk was destined to pass away the greater part of his existence ; not the semblance of variety was discoverable in his work—nothing to interest, nothing to amuse—nothing to relax the mind from the dull and tedious labour at which, from sunrise until long after sunset, the miserable drudge plied his stumpy pen ; for, be it known, the subordinates in an office such as that wherein we stood, received not their pittance in accordance with time expended, but in proportion to the number of lines inserted on the smooth parchment.

As I gazed on the cadaverous countenance of this unprepossessing figure, and beheld the apathy with which he regarded our presence in his den, it appeared to me as though all the sympathies common to our nature were dead, or, at least, hidden within his breast ; but possibly the scenes of suffering which were daily brought before his eyes, had steeled what might otherwise have proved a kindlier heart ; and having, from long habitude, rooted out all that could claim kindred with more generous feelings, he planted in their stead a perfect indifference to all and every passing event ; and, so that his task was fulfilled, by which he was entitled to claim his scanty dole, what cared he who was ruined, or who visited the foul atmosphere in which he dwelt, for the purpose of lending out his employer's ill-gotten wealth, in the hope of amassing more, be the price what it

might, at which it could be purchased? Once, and once only, the dull grey eyes of the scrivener were fixed upon my countenance, and it might have been fancy, but I almost convinced myself I could discern a sort of sneer ruffling the corners of his inanimate-looking mouth, as though in derision at the folly which could bring two young men—nay, hardly more than boys—to commence their ruin, thus early.

I might have continued ruminating on the probable history of this strange being, had not a bell, though none of the loudest, sounded from an apartment flanking the passage by which we entered. Without turning, for an instant, from the half-finished sheepskin spread before him, the dingy skeleton slowly placed his pen behind his dexter ear, and applying his hand to a spot, to which, through long practice, it was enabled to travel without aid from the organ of vision, he slowly grasped a pendant cord, to which he administered a deliberate tug. Footsteps were instantly heard in the passage, and having allowed what he seemed to consider a sufficient time for the person departing to reach the outer side of the building, he let the cord pass through his hand; the street-door shut with a loud slam, the clerk replaced the pen from his ear to the parchment, and in the next instant, the only sound that broke upon the sense, was the scratching effect produced by the progress of the quill.

I was beginning to get somewhat weary of the scene, and was about to propound a question to the taciturn scribe, when another bell rang, apparently in the same direction whence the former issued, whereupon he of the sheepskin, slowly raising his matted locks from his desk, pointed to the aforesaid door with his pen, having performed which exploit, he bestowed no further notice on us, but once more turned to his engrossing duties.

Following the direction intimated by the grey goose quill, my companion and myself reached the sanctum of the money-lender, the door of which being open, we immediately entered, whereupon, without any visible cause, it as instantly shut, doubtless

owing to the mechanical department, under the direction of the lean and half-starved copyist.

For the first time I stood in the presence of a money-lender and professed usurer, one whom, it was well known, on demanding what he termed his right, cared for little human or divine, save in so far as would preserve his neck unstretched upon his shoulders. To him the mother's prayers, the orphan's wail, the poor man's solicitation for a brief—brief time of mercy, was never replied to, but in the cold, chilling heartless terms of business. Throughout his whole life—and he was then past fifty—in no instance had it ever been acknowledged he was swayed by other feelings than avarice and spite; for to designate the low and sneaking cunning by which he endeavoured, and but too often successfully, to retaliate injuries as revenge, would be to dignify the meanest and most contemptible instinct, with a cause justly attributed to a passion immeasurably beyond any thing which his poor spirit could compass.

Shylock, notwithstanding his reprehensible predilection for merchant's flesh, was but a novice in the art of usury, compared to my new acquaintance, in proof of which, the former tried his best, and failed—the latter did the first and succeeded. Yet, what matters it? It is not my intention to enter on a dissertation on money-lenders, much less on this charming specimen in particular: I will therefore only remark, that the being before whom I then stood, approximated not in the smallest degree to what I fancied a usurer would resemble, for, in the profundity of my ignorance, I was prepared to behold a wizen-featured wretch, whose bone, protruding through his skin, bespoke the rigid parsimony in which it was his wont to suffer, while that indispensable requisite to all misers and jailors, as pourtrayed upon the stage—to wit, a large bunch of keys—I also confidently looked for as a certain accompaniment to his costume. Judge, then, my astonishment at finding myself in conversation with as sleek and rosy a visaged mortal as I ever remember to have encountered. His dress was rigidly correct in cut and fashion,

while the appearance of starvation, so visible in the clerk, was in no degree participated in by the master.

Those who remember George Blackhed, cannot need my pen to refresh their memories regarding so estimable a unit of the community, while those unacquainted with this praiseworthy mortal need more to be envied than instructed; and with all sincerity I would warn them most strongly against cultivating the acquaintance even of the most *amiable* of the fraternity, for *all are bad*; but if one could by possibility be singled out as more iniquitous than his compeers, that one was the civil, smooth-spoken, good-humoured-looking being then before me.

Although at the fountain head itself, it was no part of the system to allow Harrington and myself to lave in the delicious stream, simply because we had succeeded in tracing its source: quite the reverse; there were preliminaries to be gone through, references to Doctors' Commons to be made, questions asked, lawyers consulted, deeds examined, and finally, though not the easiest part of the affair, the money to be found, and when found, it would become necessary to enter into negotiations with the possessor of the coveted ore.

To curtail my story, George Blackhed most effectually drew from us the names of those persons to whom Harrington and myself were principally indebted, information which, to him, was of no small moment, yet at the time being unable to fathom his purposes, I looked upon him as a most vilified mortal, and I feel convinced, had occasion offered, I would have stood forth in his behalf as a champion for maligned virtue: fortunately, however, no opportunity offered, and consequently I was saved the advantage of making a greater *exposé* of my ignorance, than I was at that very moment in the act of committing.

The real object this worthy had in prospect, was simply a benevolent feeling on his part, prompting an immediate interview with our different creditors, not only for the purpose of informing them of the probability then existing of their bills being speedily liquidated, but, at the same time, hinting that as

so desirable a wind-up was to be brought about through *his* agency, he would be glad to know what per-centage they might feel disposed to allow for his services ; the said bonus being of course added, though not specified under *that* head, to Harrington's account in favour of *his* creditors, whilst an equally-satisfactory arrangement was to be effected as regarded my own.

These little *exposés* I deem it beneficial to make known, not so much for the purpose of glorying in my own folly, but with the far-more-laudable desire of impressing upon the minds of all who may be tempted to commit similar indiscretions, that, so far from gaining the desired object by successful application to money-lenders, the difficulties and miseries eventually to be endured, may be at least reckoned as ten-fold.

Full six weeks and upwards must have elapsed before my momentous affair was settled, and then was it that, having bound myself to pay into Mr. Blackhed's hands three thousand pounds at the expiration of seven years, exclusive of no less than six hundred per annum in the meanwhile, by way of interest, I was presented with thirteen hundred pounds in notes, the rest having vanished, as by magic, at the talismanic words—duly recorded in a huge volume—namely, commission, deeds, trouble, consultations, time, journeys ; and finally, having enlisted every item which human ingenuity could contrive to bring against me in the shape of a charge, the bill closed with the most sweeping and extensive of all—"expences." Those "rascally bills," as my respected sire had thought fit to designate my small specimens of youthful extravagance—those "rascally bills," indeed ! Many and oft were the moments when I asked myself in what terms would he apostrophize the amiable Blackhed, had he been made aware of the kind interest he, a stranger, had so generously taken in my behalf ; but I was by no means anxious that the knowledge of my relative should extend so far ; and therefore did I exert every means within my power to avert the possibility of the worthy gentleman's cognizance of that particular subject.

Thus then was all confidence at an end between my father and myself, I living in the daily fear of detection, confident that, sooner or later, the whole affair must transpire, and with a lively idea of the unpleasant consequences, which, in all probability, would follow close upon the *denouement*, my existence was anything but passed in that way supposed to be consequent upon a mind "tranquil and at ease."

But what made matters worse, was the unenviable certainty that the period for paying the first year's interest was at hand ; and, although the amount was not quite so much as the *principal*, how could I expect it to be produced by my father, when he had previously, and with such indignation, declared he would never liquidate the debts previously requested, though amounting to very considerably less than I now required for nearly one year's interest ?

It "never rains but it pours," and so it proved in my case ; for, when pondering in the utmost anxiety how to get rid of the horrid incubus, which haunted my thoughts by day, and disturbed my dreams by night, my mother proposed a trip to the Continent.

But a short time back, and the very idea of such an expedition would have afforded me unbounded satisfaction, and of all the family, perhaps the inclination would have been received by none with more heartfelt pleasure than myself. But now, how different was the case ! By the tenure of my bond, I was forbid to cross the sea, and to attempt clandestine departure, was to lay my security open to suffer in my stead.

Harrington was with his regiment at Exeter, but even if he had been nearer, of what benefit could he have proved, unless it were to propose a second edition of the same species of rapid destruction, of which I had already tasted quite enough to disgust me with the remainder, that might still remain in embryo ? No—I was resolved that come what might, I would never borrow more, even though I were certain of the option being afforded, which, however, was by no means likely to occur.

It was this probability, in all likelihood, that rendered me so

particularly virtuous in my resolves ; but good resolutions, however excellent and valuable they may be, will not pass as ready money on creditors whose craving appetites demand more substantial food.

At this period, when my cup of annoyances appeared about to run over, an unexpected relief sprang up, and that blessing, moreover, in the fair form of woman.

But wherefore should I call it a relief, when, like a glimmering vision oft seen among the marshy wildernesses of the forest, it only shone to lead me nearer to destruction. But I must be more explicit.

Owing to contiguity of lands, my parents deemed it advantageous and beneficial to all parties that an engagement should be formed, and eventually a marriage take place, between the only daughter of our nearest neighbour in the country, and my worthy self. Now it so happened, that the lady destined as my partner in life chanced to be most unexceptionably beautiful, and withal most captivately agreeable ; so that the first portion of my relations' wishes had long since been satisfactorily brought about, and, certes, when I was informed of the extent of happiness waiting my acceptance, I hailed it, not only as the greatest blessing earth could have in store, but also as a welcome and sure means of preventing a discovery of my pecuniary embarrassments, by a peremptory refusal to go abroad.

Added to these good and cogent reasons, I well knew the very fact of my being about to unite myself with an heiress, would readily purchase the delay of a few weeks from my tormentors, at the small sacrifice of an equal number of hundreds ; and then, when once married, how very easy would it be to pay off the entire loan, and thus get rid of my friend Blackhed and his myrmidons for ever.

Full of these thoughts, I again sought the den, where yet reposed the thin unwashed clerk in all the luxury of solitude, dirt, and parchment ; once more the door spun back, without perceptible cause, upon its hinges, and a second time I stood in the presence of the usurer.

My story was soon told ; but when I came to urge upon the notice of the money-lender that what I stated was in every particular correct, I might have spared myself that, and indeed any other oration, as the listener appeared as fully acquainted with all particulars thereunto appertaining, as was the person addressing him.

So prominently evident were the advantages to be derived by Mr. Blackhed, through a trifling delay in the settlement of our accounts, that I experienced not the least difficulty in effecting a further postponement of the arrangements, which business having been satisfactorily agreed on, I flew back to the idol of my soul, discarding from my thoughts every recollection of usurer, bailiffs, and deeds.

I need not have been in so violent a hurry, however, as it turned out ; and would that I had never retraced my steps to that house, where I had fondly anticipated I should enjoy such lasting and unalloyed felicity. Instead of any such consummation, it was decreed I was to come forth from the paternal dwelling the most miserable mortal in life ; and thus it chanced.

There is a narrow, dirty thoroughfare in London, well known by the cognomen of Chancery Lane ; it flourishes but a short distance from Temple Bar, and close to the vicinity of those miraculous figures at St. Dunstan's Church, long since departed for location elsewhere ; the abominable and uneven pavement of which forbidding street is ever choked up with monster omnibuses, and dismal-looking lawyers' clerks, in all the plenitude of what, in London, has been so aptly termed " blacks " and fog.

It was towards a dark and uncleanly entrance of a gloomy-looking building, about half way up the street, that a cadaverous object, in appearance twin-brother to my friend Blackhed's clerk, bent his steps. Two much-worn and broken steps led from the muddy causeway to the portal, which having crossed, the man pushed open a heavy and unhandled baized door, which, in the palmy days of its youth, might, some forty years since, have gloried in similitude to some shade of green ; now, however, it had become a variegated brown, save where, here and there, a

rent gave intimation from the reverse side, that, at some former period, it had boasted of a brighter though dubious hue.

That passed, the man of business entered a small, ill-lighted, and worse-ventilated room, where many persons, bent on the same errand as himself, were following up their vocation:

Many and many a time had I passed that unseemly building, but little did I imagine, that within the ponderous pages of the musty volumes heaped on its cobwebbed-shelves, the whole front of my offending, as regarded the ill-fated annuity, was inscribed. But so it was, and moreover, with all and full particulars of the transaction set down, without the slightest reservation, since, to make good and valid all deeds such as mine, the law wills that the same be entered in that office within a given period after the signatures of the contracting parties have been affixed.

It was not with the slightest suspicion of the discovery about to take place, that orders were issued for ascertaining whether or not honourable mention was made of my name in the leaves of the tomes already mentioned; but I was afterwards informed that all good and active attorneys, when employed in drawing up marriage settlements, make it their business to ascertain, as far as in them lies, whether the other contracting power be hampered with what is technically termed "incumbrances" or not.

With this praiseworthy motive, my intended father-in-law's officious man of business despatched his clerk on the errand, and but a brief period sufficed to place the lawyer in full possession of my secret.

Astonished at what he well knew his client had not the most remote conception of, he instantly set inquiries on foot, and in almost a less period than it occupies in relating the fact, the persevering solicitor gleaned from the traitor, Blackhed, the sum total of my debts; and the full amount of my iniquities was summed up with the grand item of having contracted the marriage agreement, for the sole purpose of liquidating my liabilities with the money of my intended bride, "not caring"—as the well-informed lawyer thought fit to add—"one farthing for the girl, so that I possessed her gold."

Here was a case of unparalleled duplicity and heartless selfishness laid bare. What could more plainly prove my utter worthlessness and depravity, than the facts so fortunately brought to light, in time to save the intended victim from a fate worse than death, that of being linked for life to a mean and unprincipled villain? Nothing could be more convincing—nothing more palpably true; and now that my enormities were discovered, and my wickedness expiated upon, there was not one of the poor relations and rejected suitors, who did not suddenly call to mind at least a score of instances, whereby it was, beyond dispute, evident I had never cared one farthing for my betrothed, further than as being the possessor of wealth.

Long, long years have passed since that dreadful day; but the recollection of the agony I suffered when those foul accusations were hurled at the offender, can never be wiped from my remembrance.

To be stigmatized as a spendthrift, gambler, and adventurer, were each bad enough by themselves; but to be told I cared not one iota for her whom I almost worshipped, to be taunted to my face with the accusation that I possessed not one spark of kindly feeling towards that woman, whom, to render happy, I would, with alacrity, have undergone any suffering, any privation on earth, that was indeed beyond human power to endure. At first I was dumb from astonishment, and replied not to the overwhelming charges brought against me; but as reflection came to my aid, and showed the awful precipice on which I stood, and what the inevitable consequences must be, if I allowed the slanderer to pass unanswered, I endeavoured to suppress my rapidly-rising wrath, and demanded that my intended wife should be permitted to be present, when I felt confident of being able satisfactorily to disprove the crimes laid to my charge, though unable to turn aside the pretty-well merited verdict of imprudence. But no such thing; the discovery, they said, had fortunately been effected; their dear child, through the intervention of a merciful Providence, was rescued from perdition, and never,

never more would they consent to hold further communion with a wretch, so base and so depraved as I had incontestibly proved myself. Thus melted my vision of happiness away, to be rebuilt—never.

Finding my prayers and entreaties ineffectual, I at length assumed a bolder tone, and tried to meet their calumnies with retort ; but what could I expect to gain by that, unless it were further, and more effectually, to exasperate the very people, whom it was evidently my interest to have conciliated ? But in the paroxysm of anger, these reflections came not to my aid. In the excess of my wrath, I answered accusation with accusation, abuse with abuse, until, worked up into a state of frenzy, I swore, in the presence of her kindred, that I *would* marry their relative, in spite of the whole phalanx of calumniators ; and having heaped upon their heads every malediction that a highly-excited imagination could suggest, I rushed from the scene of my agony, and, heedless in what direction I passed, turned towards my father's house. There again was I destined to undergo a second edition of the scene.

The blame, the fault, was, of course, laid solely on me ; I, and I alone, was the culprit. It was through *me*, that the darling project of my parents was thus shut out for ever ; through my base conduct the cup of happiness had been dashed to the ground, and the bitterest gall proffered in its stead. Almost to madness was I goaded on, until losing all command over myself, I boldly accused my father of being the primary cause of the misery, in refusing to pay those debts, which he was well aware must, at some time, be eventually settled.

I cannot now call to mind the precise words I uttered, nor can I remember half the sentiments to which, in my anger, I gave vent ; certain it is, that never, until that moment, had I given such unlicensed utterance to the dictates of passion.

There was no deceit then—I spoke as I felt ; and, much as I now regret having allowed such an ebullition of temper to escape, at *that* moment I was incapable of judging between right and wrong.

As I proceeded in my invectives, and by degrees lashed myself into frenzy, I recapitulated the miserable days, the sleepless nights, which had become my portion, the increasing agony which had for so long past been my lot ; and I dated the origin of all my woes from one period alone, viz.—the hour when my father refused to attend to my entreaties, answering my acknowledgment of error, and promise of amendment, with the well-remembered refusal to alleviate my embarrassments.

What between the conflicting emotions, which at that moment swayed me with a force as irresistible as it was powerful, together with the sudden revulsion occasioned by the dreadful shock of being hurled from the pinnacle of happiness to the depths of despair, I felt my brain turn giddy, the room wherein we stood appeared to swim round, a ringing sound rushed through my ears, a stream of gore flowed from my mouth, and the next moment I lay senseless on the floor—I had burst a blood-vessel.

\* \* \* \* \*

My debts have long since been paid ; but, till the hour of death, that reciprocity of kindly feeling, which formerly existed between my father and myself, never was re-awakened.

I am now an old man, the possessor of all that property, the hundredth part of which might, had it been so decreed, have made me very different from what I now am. But wherefore do I repine ? The motive which withheld the succour, indisputably had its origin in a good, though mistaken feeling ; but while I blame my ill-judging parent, it should ever be remembered, that had not my own indiscretion and extravagance, in the first instance, paved the way to my after misery, long years of useless lamentation and regret, which subsequently became mine, never would have fallen to my lot.

From my mother I learnt, during my convalescence, that months had fled by since the dreadful interview with my father occurred ; and many were the tedious heavy weeks, ere I was permitted to leave my room.

I know not, nor in truth did I ever ask, what might have been the fate of that fair girl, once destined to become my wife.

Yet it was not from apathy, or any change of affection towards the object of my earliest, my only love ; far, far otherwise. I knew, that whatever the impression on her mind might have been, it would have proved worse than useless, had I prosecuted my suit in after times, when, as a confirmed invalid, I was compelled—as indeed I ever have been since—to rest content within the small boundary prescribed by my physicians as the limit of my wanderings, or carried forth in an easy-chair, propelled by a pampered hireling. Would I have been justified, under these circumstances, in disturbing the tranquillity of that loved object, when nothing but a renewal of misery could result ? Would that have been the means whereby to prove my still-ardent affection and regard ? God forbid ! I ask not—neither would I thank the lips that told me, even whether she be yet living ; and if so, whether, like myself—nearly at the termination of her pilgrimage—alone—or if surrounded by the blooming countenances of prattling groups of children, ay, and possibly grandchildren likewise. The last time I gazed on that angelic form, seems as though at this moment she stood before me, radiant in beauty, beaming with all the kind and gentle affections of a woman, who knows neither happiness nor peace, unless it be shared with him whom her young and pure heart had singled out from the many ardently soliciting her notice.

As she was ; so to my mind's eye does she appear now. Wherefore then, I again ask, should I seek to scare away the only sunny resting-place whereon my mind cares to dwell, in order to replace the vision, fallacious though it be, with the sad reality of wrinkles and old age.

Such is not *my* will :—rather let me bask in the glorious sunshine of ideal fancy. Let me live over again in imagination, that blest, though brief period of felicity ; and when, at length, I shake off this “ mortal coil,” I trust, once more and for ever, to meet that incomparable object of my youthful adoration, as beautiful and good—even as she was when last we parted.

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